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A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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HER LETTER.

BY EDEN E. REXFORD

One eve, at the piano,
I felt my heartstrings thrill
With a merry strain of music
As any bird could trill.
And my fingers, half-inspired,
Danced fleetly o'er the keys,
And played the very sweetest
Of all sweet melodies.

Next day then came a letter—
A dainty thing of white,
All sweet with scent of pantries,
And full of love's delight.

And then I knew the secret
Of the music in my heart,
She had written me at twilight,
And, though so far apart,
I had felt her sweet thoughts thrilling
My breast the eve before.
While she wrote her dainty letter—
My darling Leonore!

Tiger Dick:

OR,

THE CASHIER'S CRIME.

A TALE OF MAN'S HATE AND WOMAN'S FAITH.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE.

PART II: HUNTED DOWN.

CHAPTER I.

THE DECOY DUCK.

TIGER DICK sat with his heels elevated on the table, sipping a sherry cobbler and glancing over the morning paper. A smile played about his lips, as if his thoughts were amusing.

"Gads! how the Prince squirmed," he said, half-aloud. "Ha! ha! I flatter myself that that hand was well played. Well, well! better a live mouse than a dead lion. Had I settled old scores in the most approved fashion, his carcass would have been worth nothing; but now I have him in my breeches-pocket, and trust me I'll squeeze the shiners out of him!"

"Dick, you old tiger, in your old age you will yet stretch yourself in the golden sunshine of prosperity. You have tempered righteous indignation with common sense. Instead of coming on the stage with blood in your eye, you appear as a diplomat. Bowling wisdom down the alley of self-interest, you have made a ten-strike worthy of your genius!"

At this point his soliloquy was cut short by the opening of the door. It gave admittance to a young man dressed in the extreme of fashion, with silk hat tilted on one side, mustaches waxed and drawn to a point, flaming neck-handkerchief, showy watch-guard, and whale-bone cane, loaded at the end with a ball of lead in a network of wire.

"Howdy, ole man?" was his greeting.

"Squat," said the Tiger, pushing a chair toward him with his foot.

Billy Sanderson, for such was his name, seated himself on the table and placed his feet in the chair.

"Messrs. Brown & Thurlow's book-keeper is always ready for refreshments!" asked the Tiger, touching the bell-cord.

"Oh, hush!" replied Mr. Sanderson, closing one eye and tilting his hat onto the back of his head. "A repairer of old boots and shoes," he said to the boy who answered the bell; and when the "cobbler" was brought, he turned to the Tiger, and said:

"Well, boss, you sent for me?"

"Billy, boy, I did. Your noble mission is to let in the light on benighted patent-leathers and kids—to take high-heeled gents in leading-strings, and display the elephant to their open-mouthed simplicity. What a calm joy there must be in seeing these tender buds unfold beneath your watchful care."

"Yes, boss, but it takes the skads, you're just a-whistling!"

"To the martyr belongs the crown, Billy. You have the reward of an approving conscience. But among all your flock, is there a lamb called Fred Powell?"

"That's where I live!" replied Billy, with enthusiasm.

"Billy, are you doing the square thing by your friend and admirer? How I long to make the acquaintance of that tender shoot."

"Sh-h-h!" sibilated Billy, raising his eyebrows and extending his hand, as in admonition.

"What's the go?" asked the Tiger. "Is he his mother's darling boy?"

"Not that exactly," replied Sanderson; "but an old maid plays the duenna over him."

"How's that, pard? Gads alive! you don't call that black-eyed peri an old maid? Steady, old boss; you're flying the track, sure."

"Ha! ha! ha! All down but mine! Set 'em up on the other alley! I say, ole man, what set you to wagging your jaw about black-eyed peri, eh?"

"I pass. What's trumps, pard?"

"Play your hand out," persisted Mr. Sanderson, still laughing. "How about the black eyes?"

"Drop it, Billy, or I'll give you a black eye, s'elp me Bob!"

"You've seen the Goldthorp, ole man. Oh, no! she ain't an old maid," said the Tiger, who still felt a little "edgewise" at being laughed at; "who may this Goldthorp be, pray tell?"

"An odd card, Dick, not marked after the ordinary fashion, by any means. She lives with an uncle."

"And what's between her and young Powell?"



When he had been writing some time, she tiptoed up to him, until she could look over his shoulder.

"They're as thick as molasses in January."

"Engaged?"

"Not knowing, can't say. They have very ungenerously left me out of their confidence."

"Stow chaff, Billy. Has she money?"

"If salt was three cents a barrel, she couldn't buy enough to season a snipe—and a little snipe, at that!"

"And this uncle will leave her—what?"

"I believe those that have been watching the run of the cards are pretty unanimous in the opinion that he won't leave her, nor anybody else, much of anything. But he'll make the feathers fly as long as he's above ground; and when the king-pin goes, it'll be a ten-strike—all down."

"Um—hum!" said Tiger Dick, his mind going back to Cecil Beaumont. "Now you can go on and tell me what you meant by saying that Fred is under the wing of an old maid."

"Why, you see, a cad by the name of Charley Brewster is spoony on the beautiful and accomplished Miss Powell, and has constituted himself a committee of one to keep her darling brother out of the company of bad boys."

"With what success?"

"Well, it's kind of up-hill work. You see, I'm quite fond of Fred. He's a gay young rooster, and I'm another, you know. What he exceeds in money, I make up in love, and so we're even, don't you see?"

"Billy, you'll do to travel. But you must bring him here, my pet. It ain't an ordinary case. Money is no object."

"Eh?" said Billy, looking up, with interest.

"Never mind the whys and wherefores; but polka him up to the captain's office, and hang the expense. You understand?"

"Oh, yes," replied Billy, scratching his head and making a comical grimace; "it's all as clear as mud. But you've said 'Trot him out!' and trot him out it is."

"That's right, Billy. Be content to play your own hand, and don't go peeping into your neighbor's."

"Let up on your paternal advice, ole man. Do I ever interfere with anybody else's alley? Nary! It's all I want to do to keep my own pins up. So endeth the first lesson!"

"That's all that's down in the books."

"Have a cigar. And now, wag."

Sanderson extended his hand and Tiger Dick grasped it.

"By-by" and the decoy duck was gone.

That evening Billy Sanderson stood on the steps of his hotel, picking his teeth after supper. Presently he caught sight of Fred Powell coming down on the other side of the street.

"So-long! Freddy," he called out. "Are you traveling or going somewhere?"

"Traveling," replied Fred, crossing over.

"I've just got a letter from my grandmother, requesting an interview at the Dutch Gardens, and I want a protector. Won't you go along?"

"I shall be very glad to see the old lady," replied Fred, accepting Billy's facetious invitation to a drive on the avenue, which led to a beer-garden just without the city limits.

"Granny's something of a shrew, Fred. Let's fortify our courage before going to meet her," continued Billy, who seldom said anything in a straightforward way, if chaff could invent a whimsical figure.

Fred laughed and accompanied Sanderson to the hotel bar, where, to use Billy's expression, they took their "reg'lar p'ison."

Fred called for cigars, and arm-in-arm they sought a livery-stable, and soon emerged in a dashing "rig."

Arrived at the gardens, they alighted, tied their horse among a dozen others, and entered. Billy glanced around the room, and then turned upon Fred, his face drawn down with mock disappointment.

"My bosom friend," he said, lugubriously, "granny ain't here! Suppose she's dead?"

His expression was so comical that Fred burst into a laugh.

"Never mind," he said; "there's one solace for all grief. Come along and imbibe."

They stepped up to the bar, along which were ranged half a dozen young men like themselves, eating "Deutsches brod" and thin slices of "bologna" with their beer, while a dozen more were in the room, seated at tables.

Fred and Billy were greeted on all hands, and were soon in the midst of a roistering set, who, as their spirits rose, attempted to sing "We're jolly good fellows all," and "We won't go home till morning," with only indifferent success.

The moon was up when the bacchanals set out for the city; and while some went off at a mad race, others jogged leisurely along—

"Making night hideous with discordant howls, by a strange misnomer called singing," said Billy—"and still they're not happy!"

Neither of the friends were intoxicated when, half an hour later, they entered a billiard-room together; but they had drunk enough to feel a genial glow of satisfaction with themselves and all the world; and when Fred espied Charley Brewster, he slapped him on the shoulder, and said:

"Hallo, old fellow. Join us in a game of pool, do."

Charley assented; but there was a grave look on his face as he noticed that Fred and Billy Sanderson had been drinking together.

"How can I counteract the influence that Sanderson is gaining over Fred?" he meditated, as the game went forward.

Evidently he must humor Fred, and not let him get the notion that he was "looking after him."

Chatting with apparent carelessness, he ascertained where they had been.

Meanwhile Billy Sanderson, while seeming engrossed in the game, was taking counsel with his own thoughts.

"Now I suppose that flat thinks nobody sees through his little game," he thought to himself, with a contemptuous glance at Charley.

"You innocent lamb, the cards were stocked before you took a hand. Your gentle friend is elected for the green, sure; but I've got to ship you first."

Billy Sanderson played in such a manner that the fight was really between Fred and Charley; and Fred, being a better player than his friend, came off victorious.

"I won't do! 'twon't do!" exclaimed Billy, with well-feigned regret. "Must have an eye-opener. Set 'em up again, and I'll jerk along the p'ison in a jiffy."

"Nothing for me, if you please, Sanderson," Charley called after him.

"Tut! tut!" replied Billy. "I'll trot it out, and then we can pour it down your throat."

"Come back here and play, and let Johnny fetch it to us," said Fred; but Billy was at the bar, chaffing with the attendant, and lighting a cigar.

When the liquor was prepared, Billy took the waiter and started for his companions. A moment his hand hovered over one of the glasses, and a light powder dropped in and immediately dissolved. Billy passed the liquor round, and as Charley had refused only to induce Fred to do the same, he accepted his.

Fred tossed his off at a gulp. Then he smacked his lips and said:

"That was a double dose, wasn't it?"

"Oh, it's reg'lar p'ison," replied Sanderson, laughing. "Whose turn next?"

And the game was resumed.

As the evening advanced, Fred ordered liquor, although Charley positively refused to drink any more.

Again Billy started off to the bar to light a cigar. While he was gone, Charley took the opportunity to say:

"Fred, don't drink any more. You have had enough."

"Nonsense, Charley. You know water's a very unwholesome beverage on such a warm night as this, and I'm as thirsty as a fish."

"Fred," persisted Charley, "we're old friends, and you won't get vexed at me for speaking my mind. But I wish you wouldn't go with Sanderson so much. You know that his company isn't very elevating, to say the least of it."

"Relieve your mind, old fellow. I'll never find fault with you for it. But you know you always had very straightlaced notions about some things. Now what's the harm in Billy? Ain't he a jolly fellow?"

"That's just it, Fred. He's too jolly for fellows that care anything about appearances, to say nothing about their own respectability."

"Too severe by half, my dear boy. But here he comes. Discuss the matter with him."

Billy now came up; and as he had been watching the faces of the friends, he guessed pretty nearly what they had been talking about.

"Kick, old boss," he said, mentally; "but I've got the gentle Freddy under my thumb. Bet your bottom dollar on that!"

Fred began to show unmistakable signs of intoxication, and Charley tried to get him to go home, but did not succeed. Finally, the interest in billiards flagging, Billy proposed that they "go a-marching."

"Fred," he said, as they emerged from the billiard saloon, "my grandmother's waiting for me further down the street. I feel it in my bones. Will you go along? It would be a pity to leave the dear old soul waiting any longer."

"No, no, Fred. Hurry home," said Charley, taking his friend's arm.

"Glad to have you go with us; but if you've engagements, why, of course, we'll make allowances, and all that sort of thing," said Sanderson to Charley, taking Fred's other arm.

"By-by, my noble friend. Fred and I are going to make a night of it. Eh, Freddy, my infant?"

"What's the use, Brewster? We're on the war-path; why not fight it out?" said Fred.

"Come home, Fred," said his friend. "It's late enough already."

"Look-a-here," cried Mr. Sanderson, "how long have you been Fred's ma, that you undertake to drum him in at set hours? I suppose you mean to put him to bed before sundown after this?"

Like every inebriate, Fred fired up at this imputation of dependence.

"Confound it, Mr. Brewster," he cried, with sudden heat, "if you want to go home, why, go home, and be hanged to you! But I feel quite competent to manage my own affairs, yet advice, I think you're pretty free with your advice, anyway, for one that hasn't been asked."

"That's a trump card," cried Sanderson,

approvingly. "No aunties watching over their mother's darling boy in our crowd. All chasses!"

And arm-in-arm they started off, leaving Charley burning with indignation.

"If it wasn't for her," he muttered, "I'd drop him altogether. But I hate to see her brother going to the dogs like that. Well, I don't suppose I can do much after this. He's provoked, and won't listen to a word from me."

Meanwhile, Billy and Fred strolled onward until they found themselves in River street. At the door of "The Jungle," Billy commanded:

"File left!"

"Hallo! what's this?" asked Fred, stopping on the threshold.

"Life, my bosom friend—life! We've got to see it all some time. Why not begin to-night? We'll just go in and look on, you know."

He led Fred in, resisting feebly; ordered drinks, and then pushing open a green-baize door, ushered him into an inner room.

The reader is, doubtless, through his reading, familiar enough with the appointments and operation of a faro-bank to render particular description unnecessary.

As our friends entered, Tiger Dick glanced at them with the ordinary interest in new arrivals, and then went on shuffling the cards, without exchanging any sign of recognition with Billy Sanderson. The latter stood aloof with Fred and began to explain the game to him.

Games of chance, like trials of skill, have a fascination for most, if not all men. Who, at our State Fairs, has not vied with the oldest turfman in his eagerness to catch the exact instant of time when the winning horse passed under the wire; and who has not felt a glow of sympathy with the fortunate winner at some lottery?

As the players flushed with success or paled at defeat, Fred drew near with awakening interest.

"Hurrah! let's put on a quarter, just to try our luck," cried Billy, with apparent enthusiasm.

He suited the action to the word, but Fred hung back.

The cards were soon out, and Billy lost.

"Gads!" he cried, with well-feigned chagrin, "the tiger chaws up everything you put into his meat-trap. Well, I'll come again. Double and quits."

He placed half a dollar on the board, and won.

"Whoop!" he cried, in evident delight. "That'll buy five glasses of beer, at any rate. Try your luck, Fred; try your luck, old fellow. The gods will be good to a couple of innocents like us."

Fred tried, at first timidly; then with success came greater boldness, coupled with eagerness, and he played for heavier stakes.

When he had played for some time, Billy got a warning look from Tiger Dick, and tried to dissuade him from continuing; but the druged liquor had possession of his brain, and he obstinately persisted. When Billy finally prevailed upon him, he went away with a hundred dollars more in his pocket than when he entered the saloon.

"Egad! my infant, you've outgrown your swaddling-clothes!" cried Billy, slapping him on the back. "Who'd go to Congress after that? Salary grabs are all in the shade. But you always was a lucky card, Fred. Blow me, if I don't believe you was born with your mouth chuck-full of spoons—gold and silver and everything else!"

And Fred exemplified the truth of the adage: "When wine's in the wit's out." He felt complacent under the praise of his false friend.

CHAPTER II.

A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING.

WHEN May Powell drove up to the bank, on the day subsequent to that on which Cecil first saw Tiger Dick, she found her father at his desk; but with that exception the bank was deserted. A look of disappointment flitted over her face at not seeing Cecil; but, summoning a cheerful smile, she turned to her father.

"Come, papa mine, put up your pen. Haven't you written long enough. Mercy! I should have my fingers all over ink, with half so much writing."

Mr. Powell looked up with a smile. "Sit down a moment, pet," he said. "Here is the last magazine."

He returned to his writing, and May, settling herself comfortably in an arm-chair, began to read.

"Well, May," said her father, at last, putting his pen on the rack. "I have an appointment just now. Don't you want to drive about a little while, and then call for me again—say in half an hour?"

"Oh, I have something interesting, that will keep me half an hour, if you will be ready in that time. I will wait here until you come back. Are you going far? Take the grays, if you are."

"All right. I guess I will. Amuse yourself until I come back."

The sound of the carriage-wheels had hardly died out, when May let the magazine fall into her lap, and cast a wistful look at Cecil's unoccupied desk.

"If he would only come in," she murmured, and a look of anxious thought came into her eyes.

She arose and went to the window and looked out on the street. Suddenly she started,

and a flush of pleasure came into her cheeks. The object of her thoughts was crossing the street toward her.

"Oh, Cecil! how I love you!" she murmured, with clasped hands, devouring him with her eyes.

Then, with a sudden thought, she stepped back from the window, and looked about for a place to hide, so as to give him a surprise. Her eyes fell upon the half-open door of a wardrobe, and the next instant she had stepped in, all a-flutter with pleasure, leaving the door slightly ajar, so that she could watch him through the crevice.

She had hardly secreted herself, when she heard him insert his latch-key. Then he entered and went straight to his desk.

His back was toward her, and May could watch him, without danger of detection. When he had been writing some time, and seemed deeply absorbed in his work, she tipped up to him, until she could look over his shoulder.

Before him lay a letter in her father's handwriting, and on another sheet of paper he had copied the signature several times.

"Cecil!"

She laid her hand on his shoulder. With a cry of fright, Cecil leaped to his feet, shaking her off violently. Then he stood before her pale and trembling.

"Why, what's the matter, Cecil?" she said, surprised at his excitement.

"Oh, is it you, May?" he replied, with a sickly smile. "How you startled me. I couldn't imagine what it was."

While speaking, he gathered up the papers and slid them into his desk, turning the key.

"How did you get in so quietly? I didn't hear the grays drive up, nor the door open," he said, turning toward her.

"Oh, that's the secret," replied May, laughing archly.

He saw that she had no suspicion of the nature of his work.

"And are you going to keep secrets from me, my own?" he asked, leading her to a seat on the sofa.

"I have a perfect right to, yet awhile," she said, laughing and blushing. And then with a sudden sobriety and anxiety, mingled with depression for her boldness. "But am I the only guilty one?"

Cecil took her hand, and a look of pain shot athwart his face. He hesitated a moment before speaking, and then said:

"May, I know to what you refer. I confess that yesterday I received one of the severest shocks of my life, and the effect of your coming suddenly upon me to-day shows that I am not yet over it."

He hesitated again, and seemed struggling with painful thoughts.

"Never mind, Cecil, dear," said May. "Say no more. I am sorry that I pained you with my foolish curiosity."

"No, no, May. You have a right to some sort of an explanation; and yet I cannot well tell you all the circumstances."

Again he hesitated in embarrassment.

"Don't say another word. I don't care a thing about it," said May, with a young girl's ready and implicit confidence in her lover.

"My darling," said Cecil, earnestly, still holding her hands, "in the innocence and retirement of your life, hedged around by the protecting care of parents and friends, you have no conception of the wickedness that a man has to encounter out in the world. The innocent are often called upon to suffer for the acts of the guilty. Will you be content to know that the trouble is averted? I would not sully the whiteness of your pure spirit by telling you its nature, even the knowledge of which must bring contamination with it."

She drew down his head and kissed his pale cheek.

"My poor Cecil," she said, "forgive me for adding to your suffering by senseless curiosity. I am glad that the trouble, whatever it is, threatens you no longer. Try and forget it, dearest."

"And you are satisfied with knowing simply that it is through no fault of mine?" he asked, drawing her toward him.

"Yes, Cecil; perfectly."

"My darling!" he said, fondly, kissing her brow and stroking her hair.

The phaeton rolled up to the door. Cecil accompanied May to the carriage, handed her in beside her father, took a smiling leave of them, and returned to the office.

"Perdition!" he muttered; "what a narrow escape. But she suspects nothing. Perhaps she didn't notice what I was doing? I am treading on dangerous ground, with pitfalls on every side; but, curse it! I'll win all or lose all!"

After dark, while walking an obscure street in disguise—for it would jeopard all of his plans to have the shadow of suspicion thrown upon him, by being seen in questionable company—he was overtaken by Tiger Dick, according to previous arrangement.

"Well, have you got the little joker?" asked the Tiger, playfully.

"There is the paper that is to damn Fred Powell or myself," said Cecil, gloomily.

"Tut! tut! man," replied the Tiger. "Hold up your head. Never say die—that's my motto."

"That's all very well; but I can tell you it's no fool's game we are playing. I came within an ace of being detected in the very first step."

"The deuce you did! How did that happen?"

"My precious sweetheart hid in the wardrobe at the bank—to give me a pleasant surprise, doubtless," with a grimace—"and while I was preparing the paper I have just given you, came and peeped over my shoulder."

"Whew! And what did she say?"

"Say? Nothing. If she had had any suspicions, you don't suppose I'd be fool enough to persist in the plot?"

"Of course not. But how did you pull the wool over her eyes?"

"Why, I played the role of a martyr, persecuted for another's fault. In carrying out the plot, I had to make a scarecrow of you; but I doubt whether I painted you any blacker than reality."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Tiger. "A little smut more or less won't make any difference with your character or mine, will it? But how did the horns with which you were pleased to endow me account for what you were doing?"

"It only accounted for a very natural display of emotion, at her sudden announcement of herself. I confess that I jumped as if a small battery of howitzers had unexpectedly exploded at my feet. That was nervousness, consequent upon having met an old enemy on the evening previous. She had no suspicions with regard to the writing, if she noticed it at all."

"Ha! ha! ha! So she gave you a start, did she? Well, all's well that ends well. By the way, I have not been idle. Billy Sanderson has your future brother-in-law under his wing, and I expect to extend the hospitalities of my house to him in three or four hours from this time. They are now out at the Dutch Gardens."

"Indeed? Have you seen them?"

"Oh, no," replied the Tiger, with a light laugh.

Cecil turned upon him with a look of inquiry.

"Very little goes on in which I have an interest, that I don't get an inkling of, one way or another," said the Tiger, with a significant smile.

"I believe you," replied Cecil, with a suppressed shudder. He felt that his own actions were constantly under a subtle espionage.

"Well," pursued the Tiger, "you will be warned when this is cashed, and must be prepared for its arrival. By the way, I have another scheme on the boards, which, besides furthering this plot, promises immediate results, in a pecuniary way. It's only in embryo now, but when I get all the pins up, I'll let you know. Until then, adieu!"

"Curse him!" muttered Cecil, when the Tiger was gone; "his brain is ever teeming with devilment. I wonder what is coming next."

As he walked on, his mind turned to a feature of his plot in which the Tiger was not embraced.

"There is one step that must not be neglected," he mused. "I must repair the blunder of losing my head, when Florence rejected my love. I should have kept friends with her, at any cost."

He had an opportunity a day or two later, when he met her at Mr. Powell's residence. Coming upon her in the garden, he detained her, as she was about to turn away, to avoid meeting him.

"Miss Goldthorp," he said, humbly, "I believe that you will be generous enough to accept an apology for my rudeness to you, two or three days since. I beg that you will let the suffering of the moment plead my excuse. If you would have evidence of its intensity, it has left its marks in my face and in the weakness of my yet tremulous frame. Such a moment comes to a man but once in a lifetime."

He stood before her apparently bowed with humiliation, yet quivering with suppressed emotion, not daring to look at her. His cheeks were pale and thin, his eyes sunken, and his hands tremulous with the unsteadiness of nervous weakness. He had the appearance of a man just up from a bed of sickness; and Florence, not knowing the terror and suspense that had racked him, attributing it all to disappointed love for her, did what any other woman would have done—pitied him—forgave him.

"Mr. Beaumont," she said, "I accept your apology; and to show you that I do so without reserve, I assure you that I shall always feel for you that friendship which I then offered you."

"Do you?" he asked, looking up eagerly.

"It is more than I deserve. I dared not ask it. But, seeing that you have volunteered, will you give me your hand on it?"

"Willingly," she replied, extending her hand.

He sprang forward with a glad sparkle in his eyes and a panting in his breath. She felt his hand tremble as his fingers closed over hers. Of whatever falsehood and duplicity Cecil Beaumont was guilty, there was no question as to the genuineness of his love for Florence Goldthorp.

"God bless you, Miss Goldthorp!" he said, his eyes humid with feeling. "Forgive me, if I say that every new phase of your character makes me love you more and more. Do not be offended. I may never speak so to you again. Will you permit me—it's a poor boon for such a love as mine."

He bent and touched his lips to her hand. Then he dropped it, and then, his eyes bloodshot and swimming in tears, his nostrils quivering, he drew himself up, and stood erect before her, as if defying her to resent what he had done.

"It can only be painful to both of us to prolong this interview," said Florence, gently, much moved by his display of emotion. "Let me say good-by."

She swept him an adieu and left him bowed beneath the weight of his misery.

As the sound of her retreating footsteps died out, Cecil roused himself and strode away with the blind impetuosity of wretchedness, obeying the instinct that seeks relief in motion.

Mr. Powell's residence, like that of Florence's uncle, was situated on the confluent of the Mississippi, only nearer their junction, and consequently nearer town. Following its course up about a mile, Cecil came to a bend, formed by a bluff, round which the stream flowed, rising abruptly from the plain on the river side, and sloping gradually the other way. At the foot of this promontory-like bluff, the channel of the river was full thirty feet deep. In consequence of a suicide at this point, the bluff had acquired the name of Dead Man's Bluff, and the depression in the river-bed, Dead Man's Hole.

Here Cecil Beaumont struggled with his disappointment and jealousy.

"By heaven! he shall never marry her!" he cried, with clenched fists. "I'll sink him in infamy deeper than the bottomless pit, before he shall call a hair of her head his own! If that fails, I'll kill him—curse him! I'll kill him!"

It was the old struggle over again, and it was midnight before he had fought it out. Then he went home, to feverish unrest and horrible nightmares.

The next day May Powell confronted him, with a look in her eyes that he had never seen there before.

"What is the meaning of this, Cecil?" she said, in a constrained tone of voice. "Florence Goldthorp comes into the house in unexplainable agitation, and you are unaccountably spirited off, when we have every reason to expect that we are to be honored with your presence; or, in case of emergency, that you will at least find time to make your adieux."

"Why, May, what is the matter with you?" asked Cecil, apparently in bewilderment, but really to gain time.

"Isn't it plain that I am honoring you and myself, by suspecting you of flirting with my friend—or with me?"

The first was spoken with flushed impatience; the last with pale jealousy.

"Why, my little girl," cried Cecil, smiling, now complete master of himself, "you never were more mistaken in your life."

He took her in his arms and kissed her and patted her cheek and laughed at her as if she were a naughty child.

"What jealous Florence Goldthorp! Why, my little darling, how absurd!"

"Oh, Cecil! I am mistaken, and you don't care for her—not a bit!—not a bit, Cecil! Oh! I should die if I knew you had a thought that was not all my own!"

She clung to him, tearful and panting, and in his assurances of loyalty and gentle chiding at her suspicions, forgot to get an explanation of his unexpected disappearance.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 27.)

Love is the touchstone of virtue.

RED ROB.

The Boy Road-Agent.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "DAKOTA DAN," "BOWIE-KNIFE BEN," "OLD HURRICANE," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE RIO DEL LOS PINOS.

In the valley of the Rio del los Pinos, not far from the San Juan, human voices could have been heard calling to each other from the depth of the deep, dark pinon forest. They were children's voices, and, with them, were now and then mingled the deeper tones of men, the sturdy ringing blows of axes, the crash of falling timber and the barking of dogs.

Drawing nearer these sounds, one would have discovered that they issued from an encampment that was teeming with busy life. White men and black; white women and black, were there, all actively engaged in some duty or other; while three or four children played "hide-and-seek" in the wood back of the camp.

The men were at work in a little glade on the foundation of four or five log-cabins, which were, of themselves, evidence of permanent settlement. And that these settlers had traveled far to reach this secluded spot, was also evident from their covered wagons and jaded animals. The most conspicuous of all, however, and that most likely to arrest the attention of a stranger, was a small, brass howitzer mounted upon a little eminence commanding the valley for some distance around.

Near by the workmen stood a little, old man dressed in the garb of a borderman. He was leaning upon his rifle and watching the men with a bland, quizzical expression on his thin, bearded face. At his side crouched a dog, and behind him stood a drowsy-looking horse with a bridle and blanket upon it.

The former was Dakota Dan; the animal at his side, his dog, Humility; the one behind him, his mare, Patience.

And, as the reader has already inferred, this little band of settlers was the emigrant party we left, in a preceding chapter, at the little village of Conejos. Three weeks previous they had left the last named point and under the guidance of Dakota Dan had reached the valley of the del los Pinos—the shrine of their pilgrimage—on the morning after the battle, when Red Rob, the Boy Road-Agent, had made his identity known, striking terror into the hearts of the people, and putting a sudden termination to the night's amusement.

The self-announcement of the handsome young outlaw had gone like a dart to the breast of Octavia St. Kenelm, and she was carried back to camp in a dead swoon. This proved beyond a doubt, the great love she entertained for the youth, and while her brother felt himself under many obligations to Red Rob, for the assistance he had rendered them in the hour of need and imminent peril, he also felt relieved, rejoiced, when they got away from the vicinity of Conejos. He was afraid the young outlaw would make a formal demand for Octavia's hand, and in case of refusal, carry her away by sheer force. The brother would much rather see her go down to her grave than wed to such a character. This was the St. Kenelm pride of spirit. And when they at last found themselves in the valley of the del los Pinos all felt relieved so far as Red Rob was concerned—felt satisfied that the mountains separated them from the young freebooter.

But, another fear kept them in a constant state of alarm. On the morning they left Conejos, a man overtook them a short way out from the village, and gave St. Kenelm a folded paper, then wheeled his horse and galloped away.

The major opened it and saw, written upon it, in a miserable, scrawling hand, these words:

"Mistur Saint Kenelm, sur, you and that there ole lady, Dakoty Dan, heaher think 'bout you'r goin' to git er way before I am able to git out, that you will escape my vengeance. I'll follow you to Calumny or hell, but what I'll have satisfakhun. And backed by the boys, I'll take you, and jump you when yer not expectin' the King of the Road."

It was the threat of a bully and a coward, else they would have entertained little fears. They knew that he would not seek satisfaction openly, but would creep upon them in the dark like a coyote or lurking savage. However, Dakota Dan had been retained in the service of the party as a scout, and his presence gave them some assurance that Missouri Moll would not approach the camp unseen.

The weather had been exceedingly fine, and so far all had gone on well. Building had progressed rapidly. The logs for six cabins were nearly all cut and hewn, and drawn in, ready to be notched and lain up. Two buildings were awaiting their rafters, and in a few days more would be prepared for occupation. Some of the men were chopping in the timber, some hauling in, and others building. Thus the work went steadily on in the new settlement which had been named "The Hidden Home."

The days wore on, and one evening the little band were assembled around a bright, glowing fire in the open air, some engaged in conversation, some reading and some musing over the past.

Octavia and Maggie were there, their pretty young faces looking bright as ever; although the former could not entirely conceal the disappointment her young heart had sustained in its relations with that handsome young road-agent, Red Rob.

Major St. Kenelm and old Mr. Gilbreth were discussing the prospects of the future in connection with their new homes.

"There is not a doubt in my mind," said the latter, "but that this valley, for sheep-raising and fruit culture, is without a parallel. I believe we can make these two branches of industry pay us well, even if we never strike a lick toward mining."

"It appears that the ancients, who once dwelt in this valley, made fruit culture a specialty; and from this source, I am informed, the Navajo Indians still derive the largest portion of their revenue. It is true, wool-growing and their looms are not neglected. Besides attending to our flocks and orchards, I would think that, when the busy season is over, we could prospect some for treasure in the mountains surrounding us."

"Perridin," put in Dakota Dan, philosophically, "the noble red-men—the Utes or 'Rapahoes—don't come down and eat yer fruit, kill yer flocks, and discomoborate yer ha'r. Durn an Injin; you can't enny more tell when he's goin' to drop down among a feller than ye can swaller yerself. But then the Triangler Extarminator will keep a-bobbin' and see what can be done for a while to'rds keepin' the valley purged of red-skins, or of ghosts, anyhow," and the ranger cast a lugubrious look toward old Aunt Shady, who sat with her ears open, listening intently to every word.

"Oh, Lord sakes alive!" she exclaimed, when ghosts were mentioned, "if dar am ghostesses in dis here country, I'll jist pack up my duds and hoof it clear back to ole Kaintucky shore whar I war bo'n."

"Durn Kenucky!" retorted old Dan, for he delighted in tormenting the old negress; "it's nothin' but an abolition nigger-nest."

"See here, man! how you talk!" the old woman exclaimed, in injured pride; "you hain't got no respect for Abe Lincoln, de proclamation, nor de Lord, you hain't."

At this juncture, Humility, who was lying by his master's side, thrust his nose upward and sniffed the air as though he had suddenly detected the presence of something in the atmosphere.

"What is it, pup?" questioned Dan, throwing his rifle across his knees.

The dog rose upon all-fours, wagged his tail, pricked up his ears, and appeared now to be listening intently.

"Sumthin' wrong, boys, sure as water runs down hill—ah! there! I've heard of it—smoke of Jerusalem!"

The old borderman was excited. He pointed directly before him, and all eyes instantly followed in the direction indicated, and to their horror beheld the face of a man covered with a long grizzled beard, staring at them with wild, unearthly eyes. But the most horrible of all was the discovery that the head and face of the man rested, not upon the neck and shoulders of a human, but upon those of an animal—an animal with a human head—an apparition that filled each soul with a strange horror.

From side to side the face of the monster turned, as if noting every object and studying each face around the fire. Then it turned, and bounding across the range of light, disappeared in the gloom beyond, while Humility, with a yelp, sped away in swift pursuit.

A deep silence fell upon the encampment. The pinons sighed mournfully overhead, and the deep bay of the dog sounded faint in the distance.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW MISSOURI MOLL KEPT HER WORD.

"It's a God's fact, friends; I've heard of it afore," said Dakota Dan, although he betrayed but little emotion. "It's called Centaur, and said to be the descendant of a race of people that used to inhabit this country, hundreds of years ago. An ole miner told me it ailers appeared round camp-fires o' nights, attracted by the light. And he said, whenever you see'd one of them critters, sumthin' bad war sure to follow."

"You don't believe in ghosts, do you, Dan?" asked St. Kenelm, desirous of testing the old ranger's superstitious tendencies.

"Wal, no, major, though some things do look kinder queer at times. One as can read books never believe sich things. Take me on the trail, in the woods, or on the river, and I've a good odydication. And then I used to know every letter of the alphabet from A to izzard, and could read a right smart sprinkle; but then one will furgit sich things. Howsmever, I can talk two langwidges aside my own."

"Indeed!" said St. Kenelm, surprised by this announcement of his linguistic lore; "what two?—French and Spanish?"

"No, major; more intelligent langwidge—hoss and dog langwidge."

A smile passed over every face at this reply, notwithstanding the serious impression left upon all by the apparition.

Humility soon returned from the woods, and the uneasiness he now betrayed by bounding away into the gloom, then back to his master's side, convinced the ranger that something was wrong out in the woods. So he at once made known his intention of going out to reconnoiter the surrounding forest.

He left the camp, and in less than ten minutes returned from the same direction, having made the entire circuit of the place. His face and movements both betrayed some excitement.

"Put out the fire," he said, endeavoring to appear calm, "for as true as thar's a heaven above us, Missouri Moll, with a party of friends and a horde of Ingins, are near! Keep cool 'bout it, or they may smell a 'mice.'"

An exclamation of surprise burst from every lip, and terror blanched each face. The fearful news fell like a thunderbolt upon the ears of the little band, and for a moment all seemed stupefied by the shock it gave them.

But the calm, cool voice of the old ranger, admonishing them of their danger, soon set all in motion.

To extinguish the fire, secure the women and children in places of safety, and replace every man in a defensive position, occupied but a few brief moments.

Three covered wagons were arranged side by side near the center of the camp, and the beds of the women placed inside of these. This was done as a measure of greater safety. If an enemy charged through camp, the defenseless would not be so exposed to crushing hoofs or murderous weapons as if they were upon the ground.

Octavia St. Kenelm and Maggie Boswell occupied the wagon on the right, facing south. The Gilbreth women and children the middle one, and old Aunt Shady and another negro woman the third.

Two guards were posted, one north, the other east of the camp. The men stood with rifles in hand, waiting for the worst to come.

Dakota Dan and his faithful dog reconnoitered in the woods.

The horses and mules in the corral manifested some uneasiness. The pinons swayed and rustled ominously in the breeze. The coyotes gibbered incessantly away off among the foothills.

The men conversed in low tones, the women in tremulous whispers.

Octavia and Maggie did not disrobe when they retired to their "apartment" in the wagon. Fear had banished all sleep from their eyes. They went to work and fastened the lower edge of the wagon-cover securely down to the box all around, as though this frail barrier of canvas would secure their retreat against intruders. Then, locked in each other's arms, they entered into conversation. They talked in low tones of their dangerous situation, of Red Rob, and in fact of everything suggested to their young minds.

Octavia spoke in praiseworthy terms of the outlaw youth, who had made captive her heart. In spite of all that her friends had said—in spite of all she had seen, she could not help loving Red Rob. Her own reason taught her that he was unworthy of her love; still she could not read asunder the magic chain that bound her heart to him.

"Brother Albert rejoices that we are away from the vicinity of Red Rob's retreat," Octavia said to Maggie, "and all on my account. But, Maggie, I cannot help loving him, outlaw though he be."

"Your infatuation will wear off, by-and-by, Octavia," replied the sedate, matter-of-fact Maggie.

"No, never, Maggie!" responded Octavia, firmly. "All naturally suppose that I love Red Rob, but none know it positively but you and brother. I have made confidants of no others."

"Red Rob is unworthy of your thoughts, Octavia, to say nothing of your love," affirmed Maggie.

"We all felt thankful, from the bottom of our hearts, that he saved the train from the Indians; and then you and I, and all the rest, felt grateful to him for saving brother's life, the night he visited the saloon in Conejos."

"I admit that, Octavia," said Maggie, "but in neither instance was his real character known."

"That matters not, dear Maggie. We accepted the gift, and so must not rebuke the donor, or else we will be wicked and selfish creatures. If an infidel saves your life, the act would be no greater if it had been done by a Christian."

"I admit this, Octavia; but we were deceived in his character. We thought at first, all of us, that we were bestowing our thanks and admiration upon a good, brave and noble boy, but instead of that, he turns out to be the notorious road-agent, Red Rob. He had some designs, it is thought, in saving the train—perhaps to destroy it himself."

"Oh, Maggie, do not talk so of him. It hurts me, and—"

Octavia's words were here brought to an abrupt conclusion by a faint noise outside, followed by a slight vibratory jarring of the wagon.

Both listened with bated breath and wildly-palpating hearts.

"What do you think it was?" asked Maggie, when they found the movement was not repeated.

"I presume it was one of the men passing, and struck his foot against the wagon-tongue," replied Octavia.

"I will look out and see what is going on, if the darkness will admit," said Maggie.

Carefully she raised the lower edge of the tilt in front, and gazed out.

The wagon was standing in the little clearing, yet the shadows of the woods rose up like a grim black wall around them, infolding all in a mantle of gloom. Maggie could see nothing, but she thought she heard stealthy footsteps retreating rapidly from near the wagon. Before she could make this fact known to her companion, both felt a kind of a thrumming jar like a heavy rope being drawn suddenly taut. The next instant the wagon started forward with such a violent lurch that the maidens were thrown from their seats. But quickly recovering their former positions, they were startled by the discovery that the wagon was in motion.

"What does it mean, Maggie?" gasped the terrified Octavia.

"The men must be moving the wagon by hand," was the response.

They tore aside the canvas in front and gazed out. Not the sign of a man or horse was about the wagon. And yet the vehicle was in rapid motion—the wheels rattling and thundering over the uneven ground as though drawn by a span of fiery animals.

"Oh, heavens, what does it mean?" cried Octavia, in terror.

"Look, Octavia!" exclaimed Maggie, pointing on ahead; "do you see that rope?"

outwit the Triangle. But I'll make it all up yet, friends—I will, true as water runs downhill. Jist keep a stiddy nerve, a stiff lip and quiet tongue. I've never found a case yit, but what we—that's me, Patience, my mare, and Humility, my dorg—could work out. We figure by the rule of three, and we have solved some knotty problems. When man, hoof and howler are all once set a-go'in', you could jist as well stop an avalanche. With Humility to take the lead with his olfactory snoot, me next to direct movements, and drap an occasional bullet here and there, and old Patience to bring up the rear and slap an occasional red-skin into purgatory—with all these things set to work like machinery, then look out for a pestilence. Why, bless your soul, friends, when I war up in Dakota, the Triangle got to be sich a dead certainty that jist to shout "Dakota Dan" at a red-skin he'd drap down instanter, and arrange his hair for the skulp-knife. As for Missouri Moll and his men—why, they won't be a huckleberry to us for to circumvent if they don't fall in with the Ingins. If two men will go with me, we'll take the trail at once, and won't come back without them gals."

Major St. Kenelm and Richard Boswell, brothers of the captured maidens, at once announced their readiness to accompany him; and leaving the camp in charge of Mr. Gilbreth, his boys and the negroes, the three set out in pursuit of Missouri Moll.

They all journeyed on foot, although the ranger took his mare along to be used in case of emergency.

They had no difficulty in finding the trail of the outlaws, nor in following it. Humility took the lead with his nose to the ground, and all the men had to do was to follow the dog. To St. Kenelm and Boswell, this would have been a difficult task, owing to the darkness, which at times entirely concealed the animal from view; but to old Dan it was no trouble whatever. The dog and master had become so accustomed to each other's part in the great drama of border life they were continually enacting, that they seemed controlled by the same intuitive volition.

Thus for miles they journeyed on, when a low, significant whine of the dog told that the enemy was near.

The trio came to a halt—they listened. They heard a slight, confused crashing through the undergrowth and trample of hooved feet some distance in advance.

"Plant yerselves right here, friends," said the old borderman, "and then I'll know whar to find ye when I come back. Don't move if the earth sinks 'neath yer feet, for, if we git separated, we might git into trouble. I'll run out and reconnoiter the stituation—be back in a minute or more."

And, so saying, the ranger stole softly away. St. Kenelm and Boswell listened. They could now hear the murmur of many voices, as if engaged in consultation; and presently they heard the tread of horses' feet going away, and all sounds became hushed.

The enemy had resumed his journey. Dakota Dan soon made his reappearance.

"Well, what discovery, Dan?" asked St. Kenelm, with eager impatience.

"The 'karnal devils have divided the work—that is, the Arapahoes and outlaws met out thar, and the 'Rappas claimed one of the gals for their share of the spoils."

"And did they get one of them?" asked Boswell.

"They did, by Jerusalem! The outlaws didn't want to give her up, but they had to or fight. But I don't know which one the 'Rappas got. It war too dark to tell—the 'Raps went one way and the whites the 'other."

This news added new weight to the brothers' grief, but to the major the blow fell with double force. Both his sister and sweetheart were in peril, but, while they were captives together, he knew the presence of one would be some comfort to the other. But now they were separated, and he instinctively felt that the one in the power of the Indians was in the most imminent peril, and between his love for his sister and that of his sweetheart, it was a hard matter for him to decide which party to follow first—the one which had Octavia, or the one which had Maggie in custody.

Fortunately, however, he had no decision to make, for Dakota Dan knew not which of the maidens had been given up to the Indians. But which ever was in the power of the outlaws, Dakota Dan considered in the most peril. For, notwithstanding his hatred for the Indians, he considered them more honorable and humane toward female captives than their white associates. He argued this to his two companions, and succeeded in convincing them that an Indian was a savage by nature, but with many redeeming traits of character, while a renegade was a creature whose moral depravity was utter and complete.

The old ranger's views were accepted as a decision to the question as to which party they should follow. Moreover, Missouri Moll was acting under a spirit of revenge, and there was no telling what his devilish heart would lead him into, to gratify his spite.

The trail of the outlaws continued due southward, crossed the San Juan river, and headed for the mountains wherein their safety would be insured.

Missouri Moll led the way with an ease and rapidity that were evidence of a familiar knowledge of the country and its tortuous windings. He was followed by ten men, all well mounted and armed, and all of the most desperate character.

The outlaw had kept Maggie Boswell a captive in his possession, under the impression that she was St. Kenelm's sister. He carried her in front of him, the poor girl lying an almost lifeless burden in his strong arms.

As they rode along, the ruffians conversed together over their victory, all appearing wonderfully elated at their "master's" success.

"Durn ther souls of them!" the desperado growled, as they moved along, "I'll larn 'em how to tamper with me, Missouri Moll, King of the Road. This 'ere gal I'll not begin to pay for that 'arnal gal that Saint Kenelm cut across my face, forever ruinin' my beauty. No, boys; we'll cut for the hills and ambush. The friends of this gal 'll be apt to foller us, of course, when we'll shoot every devil of 'em. But, lookee here, boys, I want about five of you to drap behind now, and act as a rear guard. If pursuers should come onto us, all to one's, it would hussel me like thunder to git out of the way with this gal. She's a dead lump, almost. Thar's no danger, yit it's best to keep on the safe side. The emigrants can't track us in the night, so we'll be able to git hid afore morning. But then I want a rear guard. It 'll be more military-like. They'll think I'm a reg'lar West 'Pint general afore they git through with me."

Five men at once signified their willingness to comply with their master's orders, and at once took their positions in the rear of the cavalcade.

After crossing the river, the outlaws entered the dry, gravelly bed of a stream, and continued to follow its well-defined course toward the mountains. They did not move with all the

speed nor silence possible, for in their excessive elations of triumph, they had forgotten all about the dog of Dakota Dan, by means of which swift pursuit could be conducted. And while the outlaw was congratulating himself on the success that had attended his night's work, and the distance he was putting between himself and enemies, Dakota Dan and his two companions were gaining upon them every minute.

Ignorant of this fact, however, Missouri Moll rode leisurely on up the creek. As he advanced, the banks on either side gradually rose higher and higher, and ere long the outlaws found themselves traversing the dark, dismal depths of a yawning canon several hundred feet deep. But Missouri Moll knew the tortuous windings of the rift, and to where it led, and so pushed on in triumph.

Soon he and his four companions debouched from the dismal gorge into an open court or park, that was walled in on all sides by the mountain, that rose a thousand feet above them.

The moon was now in the zenith, throwing its mellow light into the little valley. For a hundred feet or more the walls rose almost perpendicular, then began to slope gradually backward in irregular tiers, one above the other, like the terraced seats of an amphitheater. The shadows concealed many of the irregularities of the awful heights, giving the place that symmetry of form that lingers about the ruined handiwork of man.

Here, within this valley, Missouri Moll believed he was safe; but no sooner had he expressed an assurance to that effect than the report of firearms came rolling up the canon, with the sullen roar of artillery, awaking a thousand mountain echoes—gathering volume as it advanced.

"The guard has been attacked!" exclaimed Missouri Moll, with sudden terror. "That old Dakota Dan and them emigrants have overtaken them in the pass!"

They listened with bated breath. The firing ceased all at once—in fact there was but one discharge. Then, when the rebounding echoes of the reports had died away, a deadly hush succeeded.

The moon shining down into the little valley fell upon the stolid faces of five motionless horsemen.

Suddenly the clatter of hoofs is heard coming swiftly up the stony pass.

"Bence for a fight, boys!" exclaimed Missouri Moll; "it may be enemies' what's got in ahead of the rear guard."

Five hands sought a revolver each—five locks clicked as one, and the men were ready for fight.

Then forth from the shadows of the pass came three riderless horses, mad with affright. These were followed by two others with riders—all that remained of the five detailed to guard the rear approach.

"They're comin'!" cried one of the fugitives, "close behind! They've killed three of the boys!"

"Dismount, men!" roared Missouri Moll, "and defend the approach to the valley with your lives!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 266.)

Overland Kit:

OR,
THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF
DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.
AN UNEXPECTED WITNESS.

The light of the torches flared up into the night. In the glare of the flames, the actors and spectators in the strange scene that was being enacted in the center of Spur City looked grotesque and unnatural.

The little crowd of lookers-on watched the faces of the jury eagerly, as though striving to read in their features the fate of the prisoner.

Talbot, with a quiet smile upon his face, seemed to be the most unconcerned of all the little gathering.

Judge Jones looked any thing but pleased with the way that affairs were tending. He felt that he was no match for the able New Yorker. So far, the evidence had tended to prove Dick's innocence rather than his guilt. The frown upon Jones' stern face deepened, and the angry glare that shot from his eyes told plainly of bitter hatred.

Joe Rain was called to the stand. On his evidence the Judge depended. If it failed to impress the minds of the jury with the conviction of Talbot's guilt, the game was up, as far as the Judge was concerned.

Joe was sworn.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?" the Judge asked.

"Yes," answered Joe, promptly.

"State how you became acquainted with him."

"'Bout two months ago, I an' a partner were a prospectin' in a gulch 'bout twenty miles north of Kennedy's rancho. One night a chap comes along an' makes my partner and myself an offer to jine him in a litle speculation. Seem' as how the prospect looked good, we agreed for to jine him, an' did."

"That was the way you became acquainted with the prisoner, eh?" the Judge asked.

"Yes."

"What name did you know him by?"

"Overland Kit," replied Joe.

There was quite a little sensation among the crowd at this prompt reply, and even the jury-men looked earnestly at Talbot, to note the effect of the speech upon him. But not a muscle of his face moved. Injun Dick had been in many a "tight place" in his life, and as he had always met danger with a bold front, it wasn't anything astonishing that he didn't flinch now.

"You are sure that the prisoner at the bar is the man that you knew who called himself Overland Kit?" the Judge asked, with measured accent.

"Yes, I'm a-swearin' to it!" exclaimed Joe, emphatically.

"You see, gentlemen of the jury," said the Judge, addressing the twelve, "that this witness, who is well acquainted with the road-agent, Overland Kit, swears positively that the prisoner at the bar, commonly known as Dick Talbot, is Overland Kit."

The jury looked puzzled. So far, the evidence was very conflicting.

The old lawyer got up.

"Has my learned brother got through with the witness?" he asked, in his bland, oily way.

The Judge nodded assent.

"Ah, thank you," and old Rennet smiled beamingly. Then he turned to the witness and fixed his shrewd little eyes upon him.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Joe Rain."

"Your occupation?"

"Nothin' at present."

"You have stated that you and Overland Kit were partners in a speculation. What was the nature of that speculation?"

Joe scowled and cast a glance at the Judge as if to ask whether he should answer the question or not. The old lawyer detected the covert glance at once, and pounced down upon Joe as the hawk pounces upon a chicken.

"Look at the jury, witness; why do you hesitate to answer my question?"

"I can not see why the witness should be obliged to answer such a question as that," said the Judge, quickly, a frown on his face.

"Oh, don't you!" exclaimed the old lawyer, sarcastically. "Well, I trust that I shall be able to show you before I get through with this man."

"I rule that the witness is not obliged to answer that question," said the Judge, with dignity.

"Oh, very well—very—well!" exclaimed Rennet, in measured tones, a peculiar smile upon his face. "I'll put another question to the witness. You say that you recognized the prisoner at the bar as the man who was your partner in a speculation—the nature of which you object to stating—and who was known as Overland Kit?"

"Yes," answered Joe, doggedly. He didn't feel very comfortable under the searching gaze of the lawyer.

"You are quite sure of it?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever see Overland Kit dressed like the prisoner at the bar?"

"Well, no; I can't say I ever did," Joe answered, slowly.

"If I have been informed rightly, Overland Kit has black hair, worn quite long, and a heavy black beard. Is that true?"

"Yes, but the ha'r an' beard were false."

"How do you know that?" asked Rennet, sharply.

"Why, I see'd it."

"That is, you mean you guessed it?"

"I reckon I'm sure of it!" exclaimed Joe, confidently.

"Overland Kit always wore a black mask over his face, I believe?" Rennet said.

"Yes."

"Did you ever see him when the mask was n't over his face?"

"Well, no," Joe replied, slowly; he began to have an idea that the lawyer was leading him into a trap.

"Then you have never seen Overland Kit without his mask, his black hair and beard?"

"No," Joe said, very slowly and reluctantly.

"That is, you mean to say that you have never really seen the face of the man at all?"

"Why, no; I've see'd it, in course—"

"But covered by a mask and a heavy beard?"

"Yes."

"And you positively swear that the prisoner at the bar is Overland Kit?"

"Yes, I do," Joe replied, savagely.

"You swear to the face that you never saw?"

"Well, I didn't recognize him by his face?"

"What then?"

"By his voice; I kin swar to that."

"You are really a most remarkable man."

The tone of the lawyer was sarcastic in the extreme. "How much are you going to get for this swearing?" Rennet asked, suddenly.

"Why, the reward, of course," answered Joe, quickly.

The Judge looked annoyed.

"Oh!" and Rennet looked astonished. "You expect the reward, then, offered for the apprehension of Overland Kit? Possibly that is the reason why you are swearing so strongly that this man here is Overland Kit, eh?"

"I know he is!" exclaimed Joe, angrily.

"I'm satisfied," and Rennet sat down.

Joe left the stand.

"Have you any witnesses for the defense?" the Judge asked.

"Yes, I had one or two," Rennet answered, rising, "but I don't think that it will be necessary to examine them. I think that we have already proved the falsehood of the charge brought against the prisoner, by the very witnesses who were brought forward to convict him. I am willing to rest the case here. Will your honor sum up against the prisoner?"

"I think that it is unnecessary; you can proceed," Jones replied.

"Thank you," said Rennet, politely. "Gentlemen of the jury, from the evidence presented, you can have but one opinion as to the innocence or guilt of the prisoner. I have clearly proven two *alibis*. As to the evidence of the last witness, the gentleman who declines to state the nature of the business in which he was interested, in conjunction with the road-agent, and who honestly confesses that he expects to get the reward offered for Overland Kit for his pains, why, I leave it to your own good sense to decide what it is worth. All I have to say about it is, that the man who can swear to another man whose face he has never seen, and identify him by his voice alone, is really a most astonishing instance of human penetration."

The lawyer paused for a moment to catch his breath, when, from behind one of the shanties that stood nearest to the crowd gathered around the scene of trial, came a horse and rider.

With breakneck speed, the horse dashed up the street.

The glare of the torches, flaming on the night air, cast a weird light upon the steed and rider. A single glance the astonished crowd cast upon the stranger, and the truth burst upon them. The brown horse with the four "white stockings" and the broad blaze in the forehead was well known to the miners; so, too, was the horseman, with his black mask and flowing beard.

"Overland Kit!" shouted the crowd, in wonder.

CHAPTER XXVI.
THE TRAITOR TRAILED.

ONWARD, at furious speed, went the horse, the rider sitting in the saddle as if he were part of the animal. The figure of the road-agent and his noted steed was known to all.

Rennet had proved pretty conclusively that Dick Talbot couldn't very well be Overland Kit, but the new-comer was a witness whose testimony could not be disputed.

Seeing was believing, and, as both Judge, jury and spectators beheld Injun Dick in the prisoner's box, and, at the very same moment, saw the road-agent, Overland Kit, in person, dash up the street, riding with the speed of the wind, they came to the wise conclusion that Dick Talbot and the outlaw, Overland Kit, could not, by any possibility, be one and the same.

The majority of the crowd made a bold dash after the outlaw, and the revolver-shots rung out sharply on the still air of the night. But the rider seemed to bear a charmed life. With the speed almost of the iron horse, he flashed through the street and disappeared in the darkness beyond. The quick thud of his horse's

hoofs alone could be heard, and they were soon lost amid the sound of the Reese, rippling over the rocks.

The sudden appearance of the horse and rider acted differently upon the prominent persons concerned in the trial. The face of the Judge grew white with anger, and he cast a furious glance at the witness, Joe Rain, who stared with open mouth and straining eyes upon the unexpected arrival. Talbot's face was as white as the face of the dead, and he bent down his head as if in thankfulness for his narrow escape; but when the report of the pistols rung out sharply on the air and mingled with the rapid foot-strokes of the flying steed, he trembled convulsively, like one stricken with an ague. Perhaps he thought how near he himself had been to death.

Bernice gazed with a stony glare upon the horseman. Her teeth were clenched, and a strange, unnatural look was on her face; her breath came thick and hard; one hand she clasped to her heart, as if she wished to still its tumultuous beatings.

Old Rennet stood smiling with delight, and he rubbed his hands softly together.

After the horseman had disappeared, the court once more came to its senses.

The foreman of the jury got up. He was a Jew, who kept the principal store in Spur City; by name, Moses Cohen. The miners, however, had recklessly abbreviated his name into "Old Moses."

"Shentlemen, ash Overland Kit ish 'ust gone by, it ish ash plain as can be dat Meester Talbot cannot be him."

There was no one bold enough to gainsay the truth of this; so, with one voice, the jury shouted, "No guilty!"

This proceeding was not very regular, but it was very pleasing to the crowd.

"Hooray!" and the man-from-Red-Dog leaped about three feet up in the air in his joy; "let 'em out ag'in! Whar are you now, Judge?"

Judge Jones did not answer the query, but silently walked away, a lowering frown upon his stern face. The court had broken up on the instant. Talbot was surrounded by his friends, warmly congratulating him on his lucky escape. Bernice, with Rennet, had withdrawn to the hotel. She walked with heavy steps, a load upon her heart, and a strange, puzzled expression on her face.

Rennet was mentally congratulating himself.

"The idea of me, an old Sixth Warder, being beaten in a law case by any one-horse Western Judge!" he muttered, complacently, as he walked along, never noticing how pale and ill Bernice looked.

The Judge proceeded directly to his office, entered it, lit a candle, and sat down. He pressed his hands nervously upon his temples, as though he wished to still the busy thoughts that were raging in his brain.

Gloomy and sad he looked. Suddenly the door opened, and Joe Rain entered. He closed the door behind him, and surveyed the Judge with a grin.

"Wal, a nice mess we made of it, didn't we, eh?" he said, putting his tongue in his cheek.

"You infernal villain!" cried the Judge, with rising anger, "why did you come to me and say that you could put your hands on Overland Kit, when you couldn't do anything of the kind?"

"All men make mistakes sometimes, don't they?" replied Joe, sullenly. "Besides, Judge, I thought I had the right man, sure."

"You lie, you villain!" exclaimed the Judge.

"You know well enough that this Talbot was not Overland Kit."

"I swar, Judge, I was ready to take my oath—as I did—that he was the man. I never heard two voices so much alike in all my life," Joe replied.

"But you recognized the road-agent when he dashed through the crowd?"

"Oh, yes, you bet!" cried the ruffian; "thar ain't no mistakin' that blood-hoss of his'n. He's jist chain-lightnin' on the go; thar ain't anythin' that goes on four legs round this hyer valley that kin outrun him, or her, rayther, 'cos it's a mar'."

"What made you think that this Talbot was Overland Kit?"

"'Cos he's got Kit's voice; I kin swar to that."

"You've made a nice mistake," said Jones, dryly. "The best thing that you can do is to get out."

"That's my platform, Judge," replied Joe, coolly. "I jist dodged in hyer fur to git out of the way of some fellers who were a-talkin' putty loud 'bout a rope, a pine tree, and a cuss 'bout my heft at the end of the rope. I reckon if some of this Injun Dick's friends git hold on me, they'll kinder make it lively fur me."

"That is very probable."

"I've got for to git up an' dust mighty sudden now, I tell you!" Joe said, with a grin.

"Yes, Talbot's friends will be after you."

"Oh, I ain't afeard of them so much."

"Who, then?" the Judge asked, in wonder.

"Overland Kit!" Joe exclaimed, mysteriously, and with a careful glance around him, as if he expected to see the road-agent dart out of some dark corner.

"You fear Overland Kit?"

"You bet!" replied Joe, emphatically.

"Why, Judge, he won't leave a stone unturned in the Reese river valley till he finds me an' wipes me out. He's a reg'lar bloodhound, he is. I've got to git out of this."

"But he will never be able to track you!" Jones exclaimed.

"That ain't safe to gamble on!" cried Joe, with a dubious shake of the head. "Kit's got friends both hyer an' in Austen. He allers knows woe's goin' on."

"Perhaps this Talbot is one of Kit's confederates," said the Judge, slowly, the thought for the first time occurring to him.

"Of course he is!" cried Joe. "Why, it's as plain as the nose on your face. Jist think how things have gone. Talbot ain't ready for trial till near dark; that's so as to have Kit dash in without a moment's notice, an' convince everybody that he ain't Talbot."

The Judge knitted his brows; the reasoning appeared to him to be sound.

"It may be so," he said, absently. His thoughts were far away, busy in attempting to plan another trap wherein to catch Injun Dick.

"And now, Judge, I'll jist take a look out an' see if the coast is clear; if daybreak tomorrow finds me within twenty miles of this hyer camp, then you kin jist set me down for a fool."

Joe approached the door, opened it and looked out. There were very few people about the shanty. Nearly all the crowd were gathered about the doors of the Eldorado, further up the street. Joe gave a careful glance around and then, with a "So-long, Judge!" he left the shanty.

Once in the open air, Joe glided around quietly to the back of the shanty, avoiding the street, and made his way down the river. He

was careful to keep in the shade as much as possible, so as to avoid recognition.

"I'm so precious modest," he muttered, "that I don't keer about any cuss seein' me 'levant.'"

The moon was rising slowly, a great red ball in the heavens, but the clouds were heavy and dense and partly obscured the rays of the night-queen.

Carefully picking his way, displaying in the streets of the mining camp the craft of the red Indian on the prairie, Joe finally arrived at the edge of the town, and, with a feeling of relief, plunged into the little cluster of pines beyond.

"All hunkey now, you bet!" he exclaimed, in exultation, as he proceeded onward with increased speed and with less caution. But, before he had gone a mile, he became conscious of a fact that chilled his blood and brought out the big sweat-drops on his forehead. Some one was following cautiously behind him; moving when he moved, stopping when he stopped.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

THE LETTER-BOX.

BY WHITE ROSE.

Canst thou discern, with prophetic eye,
'E'en as the sibyl did of yore,
Lovely woman's fate—when linked to man—
Ever teeming with vexatious sore?
So beware to whom thy troth is pledged,
Thy future weal or woe is there indicated;
Ever heed, and thy life will ne'er be blighted.

TO
BY M. A. K.

Radiant, as shines the morning's rosy beam,
The sparkling rays of thy bright genius gleam,
Kindling the glorious walls of light that shine,
Enchanting maid, in those bright eyes of thine;
Nor are thy only charms thy talents rare;
Nature hath also made thee wondrous fair;
Endowed thy mind where every gift we trace,
Dressed with all loveliness thy form and face,
Youth, beauty, genius, every winning grace.

THE LETTER-BOX.

NELSON EDWARDS (Germanstown).
A young man should never forget his dignity, or the politeness due to the gentler sex as to "threaten" a lady. Return the Miss her letters and pictures through some mutual friend, who will only deliver one package when sure of the other; and then forget that she ever existed, as it is patent from her words and acts that she only amuses herself at your expense. You should not even desire to hold such a woman bound by her promises.

AMY V. (Nyack) writes:
"I had a gentleman friend whom I met quite often, and who professed the warmest interest in me. Very suddenly all communication with him ceased, quite on his part and entirely without

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The Arm-Chair.

An enthusiastic admirer of a favorite writer, in this manner expresses himself: "Red Rob" is one of the best stories that ever appeared, especially as Nick Whiffles Number 2 in the person of Dakota Dan reappears in it. I propose Old Comes as King Romancer, and shout, 'Hurrah for Dakota Dan and his Triangle!'

Without aiming at any such honor as that implied by the correspondent, the author named we know aims to give to his work a merit and originality which will make him not only popular but beloved by his readers. One who can enlist his readers' attention is on the high road to popularity, but he who also excites their sincere personal regard is likely to last when merely "popular" writers are no longer cared for or read. A case in point is that of Hans Christian Andersen. What a dear reputation is his! All over the world he is truly loved. This is authorship indeed.

We are glad to see our contributors, one after another, dropping into a home reputation which is lasting, and we always encourage that class of writers who seem to us to have in them that geniality and brightness of thought and feeling which render their contributions always welcome. That Old Comes is one of this class is very evident.

Sunshine Papers.

Periodical Goodness.

It was Charles Lamb, I think, who said that every man has "two birthdays;" one when he enters upon a new year according to the calendar, and one when he enters upon a new year of his allotted three score and ten.

Very true, Mr. Lamb, but not true enough! Not that I would think of mating my experience with yours; I only wish to state that my humble belief is that most persons have quadruple the number of "birthdays" that you so kindly apportion to them.

I use "birthdays," like Mr. Lamb, in free translation. Upon our birthday we commence life; and succeeding birthdays are days for recommending life, as who does not know full well?

Does not Hector upon his birthmorn look back upon his twenty-five years ended, recalling all their mistakes, and follies, and sins, and make a formidable list of good resolutions concerning the year to come? Does he not forswear idleness, and debts, and vices; pledge himself to himself to limit the number of his daily Regina Victorias and ponies of brandy, to go seldom to opera bouffe and oftener to see dear, faithful little Charlotte, who has been kept waiting through a three-year engagement while he has sworn twice the amount of love to some fair queen of the stage that he has to her? Does he not resolve to let alone the dice, and stay away from the races, and accept the ennobling position "the governor" has offered him, and settle down to steady work? Does he not with a *furore* of changes tear up the several highly-perfumed, badly-written notes he received that day, and say "no" to Jim Irask's invitation to a dinner? And has he not done the same thing upon many birthdays and New Years', and will he not always be doing it? Will ever a birthday come when he will not have a long list of new resolves ready for adoption?

And there is Jennie, upon New Year's morn. How neatly she smooths her hair and pins on a clean collar, resolving to get up, in future, instantly the first bell rings, and go to breakfast nicely appareled. How respectfully she salutes father and mother, and how attentive she is to the wants of the little ones! How diligent she is in pulling out the old school-books and arranging a course of daily study, resolving to employ her time more usefully in the year just commenced than in the year just passed! And how many New Year mornings, and birthday mornings, have been commenced as conscientiously by Jennie!

It seems to be a part of human nature to stop at these milestones of life and glance over a record graven, and make excellent resolves for the record to be graven. There is a traditional sort of acceptance of New Year as being a time for turning a new leaf. The preachers exhort their hearers to make new resolves, and commence a better life, with the beginning of the year; editors intimate to their readers that now is the time to abandon evil habits; and it is easy to believe that there is more praying done then than at any time during the fifty weeks to follow; and Bibles and prayer-books, for a few days, flutter quite above par.

Perhaps we are worse than the world in general; perhaps we have not a correct appreciation of the eternal fitness of things; perhaps we are not imbued as deeply as we should be with a holy awe of established precedents; but it does seem to us a most absurd idea to consider a few days only, out of the more than three hundred that go to make up a year, signal-posts for looking out for dangers ahead! Why, every morning of our lives should be the commencement of a day more perfect than the preceding. It is folly to think to end this or that habit when a birthday comes, and birthdays come often, too; that is, sudden spasms of goodness do.

John goes on a "lark;" he is unable to appear in the class-rooms next day, ashamed to meet the eyes of the professors, afraid that his standing will put him in imminent danger of suspension; his head throbs horribly; he feels flushed, and parched, and feverish; his own thoughts are tormenting companions, and he is too dispirited, miserable, and generally "used up" to seek others.

This is a birthday for John; how fervently he resolves to turn over a new leaf, to quit "sneering," as he dashes cold water against his burning face, and down his chokingly dry throat. As he wanders out in the air, afraid of being seen, and his head aching, until he is almost distracted, how religiously he vows to "swear off" from future sneers, to mend his ways, to "tumble to" study, and not be compelled to "cut

or smash" in regard to coming recitations. And, possibly, he meditates upon the excessive use of slang he and college-boys as a class are given to using, and dreams of instituting a reform in that line also. It is to be hoped so.

Mrs. Trifling is stricken with a severe illness. For weeks mother, and sister, and husband—if any explanation of the order in which the relatives are mentioned is necessary, consider yourself referred to a man who resides with his mother-in-law—hang over her in an agony of suspense, only relieved by occasional squabbles concerning the course of treatment to be pursued, while her life seems near its end. Slowly, she recovers, however, and resumes her wonted place in the family. But, oh! what a change is here! The children have heard more of death, and where the respective classes of good and bad little boys go when they die, and "Who made you?" and other parts of the catechism, than ever before in their short lives. They do not think much of the catechism, however, with sorrow be it related, for they are not allowed to drive in their goat-cart or play marbles any more of a Sunday. All the family go to church since Mrs. T. was ill; and are shocked when they see their neighbors picking a bunch of flowers upon the holy day, with all memory obliterated of how recently they did all their fancy gardening upon that day. You see, Mrs. Trifling's illness proved a birthday for that family.

As beautifully now about "the Lord's will," and being prepared to die, as if they had used the Bible they got out of its hiding-places in the parlor-closet a few weeks ago, all their lives. Is it wicked to wonder, when a body cannot help wondering, whether that family think they are coaxing God to believe these have been their customs all along?

There was Deacon Jones, who had a birthday not long ago, came near getting blown up, or down, in a steamboat explosion. It was just wonderful how many bushels of potatoes he gave away within a few weeks, and how many ten-cent bills he put in the collection basket. He is not doing so as much as he was. When Fairfield church needs several hundreds of his money, they intend to organize a Ku Klux, all on their own responsibility, and frighten the old gentleman within a few inches of his life's termination.

It is cowardly, all these birthday resolutions, this periodical goodness! Do not wait until some fright, or illness, or red-letter day, suggests to you the propriety or necessity of correcting your habits. Have the suggestion always in your mind, and let every day of your life be a period of goodness.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

SPONGING.

THE person who feels himself somewhat above gaining his living by the work of his hands leads one continual life of sponging. Perhaps you think I ought to place in the category the person who thinks himself above working with his brain. I was going to express it so in the first place, but the doubt entered my mind as to these spongers having any such necessary article. I believe anybody who has been gifted with a brain will have too much pride to be any such nonsensical sort of a creature.

Perhaps you don't know what sponging is. It is borrowing five or ten cents here and there at one time and another, and never thinking to repay it. It is getting the loan of a postage-stamp and never making up that loan. It is borrowing your neighbors' books and papers to save the expense of having them for your own. It is getting your year's reading free by sending for specimen copies of periodicals which you haven't the most remote idea of ever subscribing for. If some publishers did not have the kindest of hearts, this bit of sponging would have ceased long since and they—the publishers—have had more money in their pockets.

It is this dead-heading to theaters, concerts, exhibitions, on railways and steamboats—anything so as to have no expense attending it, that is sponging of a very mean order, and those who practice it are among the meanest of mankind. I don't say that every one who accepts a deadhead ticket is a sponger, for I don't mean anything of the kind.

The true spongers expect to be favored with notices of themselves and their business when they do put an advertisement in a paper, it is generally to the extent of three lines, and then they think they are adding immensely to the circulation of the paper and the income of the editor, and expect half a column of puffs by way of a return!

Mrs. Stubbs has set her heart upon something she *must* have, and when Mrs. Stubbs sets her heart upon anything, it is to say that she never rests content until she has accomplished her desires. Sometimes she doesn't exactly know how she is to gain her desires, for it takes about every cent to provide for herself and family. Maybe she wants a new dress, or some article of furniture, and the way she gets either is in this manner: She shuts up her house for the summer and takes her family visiting among her friends, thereby saving a great many dollars, and those great many dollars will be so much saved toward buying the new dress, furniture, or whatever it may happen to be, that Mrs. Stubbs has set her heart upon.

Call such actions what you may, it is nevertheless a mean kind of sponging. No, my dear, I don't exaggerate; such things occur every summer, as many a good father and wife will bear testimony to. And some folks will actually brag of such achievements of saving, no doubt thinking themselves extremely clever and smart. To me, it seems anything but clever or smart. It's an arrant piece of imposition, so palpable and clear that I wonder it has not been seen through before this time. It's all well enough to be economical and saving, but saving by living off of others is a contemptible sort of maneuvering.

There are a great many spongers among some of the benevolent societies, who are forever begging funds from us to carry on their own institutions. I have no reference to any of the institutions that are really deserving, but those that will crop out here and there, that seem to have for their motto, "Bleed the people's pocketbooks as much as we can, and keep the profits ourselves." The objects they desire to accomplish—according to their programmes and prospectuses—seem to be the same as sending fur to Lapland or flannel underwear-garments to Africa. Their agents come to us in canting and whining tones; they generally have the "smuffles" and show extremely large pocket-handkerchiefs to wipe away the crocodile tears they shed.

We give our name, oftentimes, to get rid of these spongers, and at other times because we fear we may be withholding our charity from some really good cause. It is a hard thing to refuse charity at any time, and it is most difficult to distinguish between that which is needy and which is not, consequently our weakness leans toward giving at every call.

Now, these same spongers take advantage of this weakness, and come often to relieve us of our money. They are regular leeches, and bleed us at every point.

Thus the world wages on, and the spongers seem to be on the increase instead of dying out. I know of no remedy, so I presume we must "grin and bear it." I wish we could sponge them out.

EVE LAWLESS.

SIGNS.

It is an exceedingly bad sign to see a young man hanging around a bar-room, or loafing at taverns. Such loafers rarely turn out to be any ornament to good society; they clog the wheels of life as well as cloud their own destiny. Loafing never did and never will pay; it cannot be made to draw interest; it is a wretched way of getting along, and is a pretty sure sign that one is "going to the bad." To become a loafer is to alienate all honest friends and to accept in their place the habits of the groggery and the street vagabond. It is to make yourself despised, shunned and distrusted. To say that such a man is a loafer implies about the worst that can be said of him.

It is a good sign to see a child who is respectful to his parents and who does all in his power to render their lives happier, and make their burdens less arduous to bear. It shows the child to have a good heart and a correct mind, which, when he comes to mix with the world, will render him honored and useful. Such a child does not treat his parents' ideas and wishes as "old-foggy," does not speak of them all the "old man" and "old woman." It will be a sign that he will be a good husband for some good woman, and the sooner she secures him the better. I don't believe that a man, who treats his parents kindly, will be very apt to misuse his wife; he'll not be apt to grumble on washing-days, or make a fuss if you ask him to hold the baby for five minutes.

It is a bad sign to hear young girls telling little fibs or exaggerated stories concerning their friends and acquaintances. These little fibs may grow into strong falsehoods—the harmless remarks may become very harmful ones, and what is said "just for fun" may turn out to be not funny, but sinful and bad. Picking at others' faults, sneering at others' foibles, talking of others' affairs only breed the scandals and make mischief. It's a bad sign to talk scandal, dear girls; so don't encourage the habit at all.

It is a good sign to see a person kind and gentle to animals—one who feels for their sufferings as if they were those of a human being. Poor dumb creatures! They cannot utter the thanks they feel—for they do feel them—but do they not often, by the expression of their eyes, show you the gratitude they feel? People who stop their work to bind up the wounded limb of a dog, or to pet a little bird that some cruel sportsman has wantonly wounded, cannot be bad at heart, and ought to have your vote at the next election. Kind to the mute beast, they will be as kind to the human being.

It is a bad sign for a person to be constantly changing his business, to leave a certainty for an uncertainty, to leave substance for shadow. It has proved the ruin of many a promising man. No matter how lowly the position, or how small the pay, if it is certain, for it will be better than leaving it and doing nothing. Of course, if you are *sure* of doing better, then a change is wise, but you should be *very* sure ere you make the change.

The great amount of time wasted in going from one employment to another is shameful. People ought to awake to the fact that our time is not for us to waste. We are expected to make good use of it. If one of these "will-o'-the-wisps" comes to you, my dear girl, and proposes for your heart, peremptorily decline the honor, for there is no stability in such a person, and trouble is in store for his wife and family. He may indeed want to change you for another wife! You'd better beware of a changeable man. Remember, "Fickle man, fickle fate."

It is a good sign to see folks live in this world like neighbors, like fellow-travelers, thinking not less of themselves but more of others; putting themselves out a little to secure the comforts of others, and making the "golden rule" more like a reality than it now seems to be. If we could think that we were not the only ones for which this world was made, we'd be much more creditable to humanity, and we would gain favor from those whose favor and good opinion were worth the having. If you want praise, I don't know a better way of having it than by doing good. The very knowledge of well-doing ought to be praise enough.

F. S. F.

Foolscap Papers.

A Late Supper.

We had a supper at the club-rooms last night, it being an anniversary occasion.

Our club consists of forty members, and is called the Last Man Club; the last member who survives is to pay the debts of the balance. People who think we are a little slow at present can see the reason why, and we hope they will be patient.

The supper was gotten up in good style, and gotten down in better.

I never ate so much in my life, and nearly made an incomplete wreck of my appetite, which I have taken the utmost pains to preserve. This appetite had the capacity of a steam bologna-machine under high pressure.

After supper I wasn't hungry a bit, and thought I wouldn't want anything to eat for a year or two, and calculated I would save some hundreds of dollars by it.

But, somehow or other, every clam I had eaten got its shells on after I got to sleep, and then I imagined I had been drowned in an oyster-bed, and had to fight terribly to keep the oysters away that were trying to pinch me to death with their shells, and drive me out of their dominions as an invader. Oh, shells of ocean!

Then I thought I was a flounder, and floundered around so much that I floundered out on the floor, and woke up and went and looked in the looking-glass to see if I was myself. Feeling convinced that I was—what was left of me—I went to bed again, and was soon in the arms of Morpheus, who was no more than a roast-pig, with more arms than I had the conscience to count.

Then I thought I was a huge apple-dumpling rolling down a hill with a stump in the way against which I rolled and was smashed all to pieces, and here I rolled over, and immediately seventeen thousand pigs' feet, pickled, began stamping over me as if it was a vast drove of hogs on their way to market, and every hog putting his best foot foremost.

My wife gave me a sound shaking by the ears, and I in mediately subsided into a frog, doing my level best to get away from a gang of boys who were pelting me with stones, and

one striking me on the back—it was my wife trying to pound life into me, but pounding it out—turned me into a beefsteak which the cruel cook put into a frying-pan, red-hot, and I began to kick and squirm as if willing to jump out of that frying-pan into the fire. Just as the cook was about to say I was done, and I was glad of it, I imagined myself to be a huge turnip in a wide field, and that somebody was trying to pull me up by the top, and, waking, I found my wife jerking me by the hair with an affection that seemed as if it would scalp me in no time multiplied by suddenly.

Then I relapsed again and set sail in a frail bark made of very short pie-crust, on an ocean of turtle-soup; the waves broke over me as I paddled along with a tablespoon, and threatened every moment to engulf me. Giant turtles swam close to me and endeavored to snap me up, boat and all, and I had nothing to defend myself with but a second-hand toothpick, and at last, with a terrible crash, my bark struck upon a reef of corn-bread, and went to pieces, and I walked up to find myself out on the floor, feeling quite glad to think I was still safe and alive in this world, although with not appetite enough to board at one of our common boarding-houses.

I got rid of my wakefulness by going to sleep again after much trouble, and dreamed that I was a goose. I think it was all on account of the half of a goose that I ate; I didn't eat a whole one, and don't see why I dreamed I was a whole goose; but there are things which we can not wholly account for, wise as we may seem.

As a goose I wasn't much of a success, because I had my head wrung on quick notice, and was sorry that that wasn't the end of me, very sorry; for I straightway thought I was a huge egg, getting dreadfully beaten and no chance for my life. I thought I had my neck dreadfully yolked. I imagined I was dreadfully dead beat, but came to life, fortunately, to find my wife beating me over the head with a pillow, and I in the last stages of being brained.

I think I shall never eat any more buckwheat cakes, for when I got to sleep again I had the largest cake to eat that ever was baked, and woke again to find I was trying to eat up a quilt.

It isn't the most agreeable thing to dream you are trying to get away from a codfish-ball nearly the size of the moon, and making for you with unpleasant rapidity. Not hardy.

Nor is it pleasant to imagine you are a cabbage-head in constant dread of a guillotine in the shape of an enlarged kraut-cutter; it isn't a very pleasant reminiscence.

When I thought I had departed this life of actuals and turned into a sheep to eat grass, I felt so sheepy that I immediately woke up and got up and stayed up the rest of the night.

I am not very hungry to-day. I feel a little tired of actuals, as it were.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

Woman's World.

"OH, SO SWEET!"

WHATEVER may be said in regard to the cost of dress-goods, it is very true that they are very charming in styles and exquisite in fabric. I find myself complaining and admiring in the same breath. Oh, so expensive but so pretty that it is almost a shame to complain! Such soft wool, such delicate combinations of silk and worsted, such beautiful warps of linen and woofs of cotton—why, it seems as if fairy fingers must have woven them; and we know that, although machinery had a chief part in their manufacture, the taste, skill and capital employed cannot be denied liberal profits. So, what with this, and the cost of the raw material, we must pay roundly if we will have the goods.

A tour of the great stores, which now make a full display of their spring and early summer stock, makes it evident that, if times are hard, and economy imperative, the temptation to buy never was greater. Of the favorite grenadine we have several styles, from the plush stripe at \$5 per yard to the "canvas-back" at \$1. These latter are always recognized favorites for substantial wear, and are made up as in past seasons in entire costumes if chosen, or in single skirt and basque; the skirt is entirely covered with a mass of shirrings, knife-plaitings and puffs. The basque is correspondingly trimmed down the front and back. The rich fanciful grenadine can be made with-out a silk lining, and worn over a colored silk dress, when a variety in the toilet is needed. Sleeves are made of folds of grenadine placed crosswise on the upper portion, in loose, fluffy puffs, and are finished at the wrist with laee or ruffs, or puff, or reversed plaiting.

Of the good old Scotch gingham we have such variety in styles and price that we vote them the premium as combining the useful with the beautiful. Inexpensive suits of this goods are now offered, *ready-made*, in large quantities for use in the country. If the stripes are blue and brown there are blue needle-worked ruffles on each edge of the vest and sleeves, and just beneath, peeping from the blue ruffle, is one of pink. Plain suits, consisting of jacket, overskirt and skirt, are easily washed, being trimmed simply with flat plaitings, plain cuffs and pocket-flaps, and buttoned with large white pearl buttons.

Summer materials, such as barage worked with silk, and embroidered battistes trimmed with small muslin plaitings, will relieve the monotony of the excessive use of plaid goods, and allow them to be worn to their proper use, which is to make charming toilets for spring wear, for morning use, and for traveling purposes. Many summer suits will be made or trimmed with plaid, but whether they will be generally used or not is yet to be decided.

There is a change in the style of evening-dresses which is worthy of notice. The tunic is suppressed. The skirts are either puffed to the top, have plaited flounces all the way up, or have ruchings and shirrs half-way up, with a scarf or a garland of flowers disposed in Oriental style, drawing the skirt slightly in and giving it the semblance of an apron. Flowers are arranged in garlands, placed upon black velvet, and worn as necklaces to correspond with the flowers on the dress and in the hair. Nothing can be more youthful and becoming than these necklaces of flowers, with which diamonds can be mingled like dew-drops.

Sleeves are an important part of the dress, and require special consideration. The Haidée or Greek sleeve has appeared on the horizon of fashion; whether it will be adopted or not is yet to be decided. This sleeve is very long, and cut square at the bottom; the inside is left partially open to allow the arm to pass. This form has been in vogue for some time past for street-garments. A more simple style of sleeve is ornamented at the bottom with a shell shaped trimming in cornet-shape, with loops of ribbon intermixed. There is another sleeve, shirred half-way down and finished at the wrist with a deep plaiting *en feuilleté*, which means plaits sewed back, one close to the other, in imitation of the leaves of a book.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wasted, and all cases of error are ruled first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS., as "copy," third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, leaving page as it is written, and carefully giving it the full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Contributors must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We decline "Love's Sacrifice," "My Wife's Jealousy," "Free Tooth-pulling," "A Summer Excursion," "John Ayman Hoskins," "Still I Love to Live," "Avenged," "The Doomed Hunter."

The following we place on the accepted list: "The Way the River Ran;" "Aunt Comfort's Joke;" "Madge's Fate;" "Whose Was the Sin;" "How She Humiliated Him;" "Old Grosvenor's Pet;" "A Prairie Lick;" "The Major's Salute."

A MS. from New Era not taken from postman: six cents postage underpaid.

JACOB T. Cannot use your matter. It is immaterial.

JESSIE KING. Address Lester Wallace, care of Wallace's Theater, New York.

DUKE OF MONMOUTH. The sea serial named when we can find room for it.

EXCELSIOR, TROY. Address letter of inquiry to Editor Charles Foster, Troy, N. Y.

ROBIN HOOD. We know of no such order, in this country, as that indicated.

SCIENCE. The laughing-plant grows only in hot climates, and is indigenous to Arabia.

MISS KATE B. An excellent treatise on plant pests is given in No. 3 of Vick's "Floral Guide" for 1875. Send for it.

LITTLE IOLA, No. 2. Answered your queries in No. 270. When under age girls cannot be legally married without the consent of parents or guardians.

HENSLOW'S BOY. We regard the Trophy and the General Grant varieties of tomato as simply perfect. You want nothing better. Pay no absurd price for "somebody's" tomato.

DEXTER, JR. We know nothing of the "art" of extracting teeth by electricity. There is a *quack* behind the "art" we apprehend. No man ever extracted *worms* from the teeth. The nerve is now taken out by some dentist.

ODD FELLOW. To go into an expensive scheme of advertising when every department of trade is dull is a mere waste of money. You cannot create business when there is no demand for it. Only advertising agents think to the contrary.

D. L. E. There are barrels of all sizes. A legal barrel contains 100 quarts—or 8½ bushels, "struck" measure. A barrel that holds 196 pounds of flour is, in real capacity, ½ bushels; therefore all who sell fruit, etc., in such a barrel give ¾ bushel too much.

PARTY OF THREE. The trip to California is very expensive—more so than the trip to Europe, for the same stay. Railroad fare \$130; sleeping-car, 7 days, \$21; meals, same time, \$21—making about \$260 for the mere passage, to and from. The cost there to travel and see things is \$6 gold per day, making a sixty-day trip consume not less than \$750. To return by the Isthmus will save \$75, but will occupy four or five months to study.

ECONOMY asks: "Is it true that fishing with nets exterminates salmon?" It is only partially true. Salmon and trout disappear from streams more in consequence of the spawn and small fry being destroyed by factories and by means of nets, which prevent the ascent of the fishes to their spawning beds at the sources of the streams, than from netting. The nets are used for salmon, and rapidly restocking our eastern rivers, and ten years hence we shall probably have salmon in the Hudson once more, now that their habits have been scientifically ascertained.

S. B. The "burnt cork paste" used by negro minstrels is made by first soaking champagne corks in alcohol; then set on fire and burn to a coal pulp; then rub this pulp or coal into a paste by adding it with *ale*. This mixture readily washes off and adheres well to the skin by rubbing it in.

MISS AMY M., New York. Miss Adelaide Neilson never played in this country the role of Princess Elizabeth in the drama of "Ax and the Crown." And Scott Siddons has, however, acted the character here.

PONDERS. Don't buy an unabridged dictionary of an old edition. Such changes occur as to render it necessary to frequently revise the lexicons, but as it costs too much money to get up new plates the old forms are printed from with new dates; hence it is necessary to exchange for new editions, and you find them not don't buy the book, at any price.

DAN EMMET. The red orang (or orang-utan) is a native of Borneo and Sumatra. It is a monkey, and resembles man more than any of the simia or ape species, except the black or African ape, which is the man-monkey par-excellence. It does not exceed five feet in height, and possesses a degree of intelligence quite startling to those who are loth to acknowledge the monkey as "brother."

G. R. Enamelled leather can be polished with the following mixture: Take 1 lb. of fresh lard, and one pint of linseed oil; heat them each lukewarm, and mix them well together; have the leather perfectly clean, apply with a sponge, and wipe with a soft, dry cloth until the polish is produced.

M. A. Y. We do not think there is any writing-paper in use at the present day that is more genteel than the plain English unruled of a pretty tint; we fear you develop a most unbecoming style.

ALEX. D. When an animal, a horse, or a cattle gets choked, make them jump over bars, as high as they can get over, and they will be relieved thereby, in most cases.

HANDEMAK. Oil of cloves, diluted and rubbed on the skin will keep mosquitoes and flies from annoying you or your horses. Only a few drops need be applied each day.

M. A. T. But one paper was published in America during the reign of Queen Anne, and that was the Boston News Letter, printing but 13,000 copies annually.

GEORGE M. A. The age of the world is not to be determined by the reign of Queen Anne, and that was the time to his just-published volume, approximately the time to sixteen million years, dividing each million into an epoch or geologic era, and bringing man on at the beginning of the last. The geological age we are now passing. This fully admits the claim of scientists to man's great antiquity. That he was coexistent with races of animals long since extinct is now conceded. Prof. Dana accepts the doctrine of evolution, showing how our age but prepared the way for what succeeded, but regards man as a special creation, and does not attempt to study.

OSCAR H. We have frequently adverted to the time made by fast horses, and can only say that Dexter's time has been beaten by several horses beside Goldsmith Maid. I don't know why Bonnet never has paid over the promised prize for beating his "King of the Turf." The time list, as it now stands, we believe, is as follows: Goldsmith Maid, 2:14—American Girl, 2:16½—Occident, 2:16½—Lulu, 2:16½—Gloster, (dead) 2:17—Dexter, 1:17½—Red Cloud, 2:18—Nettle, 2:18—Lady Thorne, 2:18½—Lucy, 2:18½—Judge Fullerton, 2:19—George Palmer, 2:19½—Bodine, 2:19½—Flora Temple, 2:19½.

HUMANITY asks: "Is it cruel to fish?" No more than to shoot lions, tigers, and wolves. Fish excel all these in boundless voracity and cruelty, and without exception eat their own offspring whenever they find them. The chief fault, and little pain is proved by observation, a shark which had been split open and entirely disemboweled, having been turned adrift, was seen to seek for prey as if nothing had happened for some time. Instances are common of fish following a hooked one, biting pieces out of it, and even swallowing it, so that both are landed together. The good souls who cry out against the cruelty of anglers, do not do so until they have seen the peculiarly savage and merciless character of the creatures they sympathize with.

OPERA-GOER. We cannot inform you regarding the salaries of the numerous singers that have

KNIGHT ULRIC.

BY FRANK DAVES.

Knight and lady walked the floor,
Kissed he would her lily hand,
And left her at the castle door,
And rode into the stranger's land.

Across the land he rode away,
To Arthur's kingdom by the sea;
Across the land he rode away,
Upon a wild knight-errantry.

Said he, "My lady bids me go,
And fight the tyrant in his walls,
And win a fame as fair as snow,
Before I tread again her halls."

Viziered knights in battle stand,
Blood and banners rise and flow,
Shrieks are borne across the land,
Brave men sink at every blow.

A head is pillowed on a stone—
Gory, ghastly is the head;
By the moaning sea, alone,
Lady Clara's knight lies dead.

To Lady Clara the tale is brought
Of Ulric murdered by the sea;
Quoth Lady Clara, "That is naught—
There are other knights than he."

"Jewel."

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

RUBY looked up from her reading with a troubled, anxious expression on her face, and a little gleam of incipient contempt in the large brown eyes she turned toward Blanche Lambert's flushed, pretty face.

"I wish you would think again before you do any thing so foolish—so reprehensible. Blanche, you do not know what misery you are rushing headlong into."

Blanche laughed merrily, defiantly, as she laid down her pen and turned her face toward Ruby.

"I never saw such a girl as you are, Ruby Delamere! You are so afraid of a little fun, as if there is the remotest possibility of my ever being found out."

Ruby's face flushed a little, but she answered, very quietly and gently:

"I do not think I am afraid of fun, Blanche—honest fun. But if you call it fun for a modest young girl to answer a matrimonial notice, your ideas of propriety and mischief are very different from mine."

There was a seriousness and earnest reproof in the girl's voice that just convinced while it annoyed Blanche; so that her answer was sharper than was necessary.

"Well, then, what do you call it—a crime? Is it the unpardonable sin I am committing in writing to a strange gentleman, or would you advise me to wait and see him first, and then very discreetly fall in love at first sight, as you did with Clare Howland?"

Ruby's cheeks burned at the insulting language, and Blanche shrunk from the look in her eyes. Only for a second, however, for Ruby had her temper well under control, and she replied in her usual low, sweet tone:

"You are thoughtlessly unkind, Blanche, in taking advantage of my undisguised regard for Mr. Howland, which you know is simply and only regard, while it does not excuse you for your dreadful imprudence. Be advised, Blanche. Tear that letter up; I tell you there is trouble in store if you send it. I know it—I feel it."

Blanche laughed again, sneeringly:

"Then there'll be trouble, for I'm going to send it. Here, I'll read it to you."

She unfolded the sheet and commenced, but Ruby, with commanding dignity, arose.

"I decline to have any thing to do with it. I hope I am enough of a woman to plainly manifest my displeasure at such disgraceful proceedings."

She went out, perhaps with footstep a trifle hurried; and Blanche threw down the sheet with fingers quivering with anger.

"The proud, conceited minx! I'll teach her to repent this day! Because she is rich, and a year the oldest, and because she knows Clare Howland's just crazy over her, she thinks she can come her fine airs over me! But I'll fix her!"

Her face was flushed, and her eyes flashed, as she looked through the open window and saw Ruby slowly walking up and down the garden path, so slight, so graceful, so undeniably lovely, with her pale-golden hair drawn off a low, white forehead, under which the beautiful, thoughtful eyes glowed like wells of fire.

"She knows she's a beauty, and she prides herself on her grand ideas of propriety and conscience and exclusiveness. I'll do it, as sure as my name is Blanche Lambert!"

A sudden thought, fate-inspired, had occurred to her, and she fairly flew from the room to put it into execution before Ruby should return.

Up the stairs and into their common bedroom was the work of a second. To take her album from her trunk and remove a photograph of Ruby, that Ruby had given her for friendship sake, not a fortnight since, was only a moment's work. Down-stairs again, and in several seconds, while the innocent, unconscious girl was still walking up and down, the letter was folded and sealed, with Ruby Delamere's sweet, witching face inside.

"Now my high-toned lady, you have brought it to yourself—that trouble you felt was in store. Now for a promenade to the post-office, to mail the letter to the unknown *St. John Vincent*."

A delightfully furnished apartment—half sitting-room, half smoking-room, with numberless little elegancies scattered here and there, that attested to the good taste and equal fortune of the owner.

And cozily ensconced in arm-chairs, dimly seen through mists of fragrant smoke, two gentlemen; one, much younger than the other, and both well dressed; good-looking.

In front of the younger of the two, was a desk, piled inches high with letters, in every conceivable handwriting, of every shape, color, kind of envelope; while in a huge basket underneath were scores that had been read and indignantly consigned to eternal oblivion.

With a mischievous gesture of entreaty, Baldwin turned abruptly from his task of opening and reading, to his companion, who lay off leisurely smoking.

"Come, Howland, be obliging and lend a hand. Help a fellow, do, to wade through."

Mr. Howland raised a pair of grave, handsome eyes to the boyish, animated face.

"No. I disapprove of the whole affair, and shall keep my word of having nothing whatever to do with it. You know my views on the subject."

It was a wonderfully sweet voice—clear, commanding, and the words were spoken with an air that carried conviction with them; that was increased by a look at the fine, manly face, the stern, clear-cut lips, the firm chin.

"Do you really think I have done a terribly wicked thing, Howland?"

"Not a terribly wicked thing, Baldwin, but

a ridiculously foolish thing—that, in other less innocent hands than yours, might work the woe of a life-time."

The grave, serious tones seemed to impress Baldwin.

"But you don't mean to say that you think all this bushel of letters is from women who are in earnest?"

"That, of course, I do not know. I only repeat, that, in less scrupulous hands than yours, no one could foresee the folly that would ensue. I only know, by my own instincts of refinement, that, of all those letters, there is not one from a thorough, genuine, delicate-souled girl."

His fine face lighted with a sudden glow of tender pride as he thought of Ruby Delamere—dainty, retiring, lady-like; and involuntarily compared her with those bold, venturesome girls who possessed so little delicacy as to write to a strange man.

So Baldwin went on, opening the letters, while Howland slowly smoked his cigar, his thoughts entirely with the one girl he ever loved; the girl he had known so short a time, yet loved with all the strength of his thirty-five years of upright purity of life.

He dwelt on the vivid remembrances of her lily-like face, and her yellow-rose hair, and her dark, soulful eyes, and her pink-tinted cheeks, where the exquisite color deepened when their eyes had met.

He had not seen her for several weeks, but only a day or so ago had come an invitation from Mrs. Hartwell, where Ruby and several lady friends were boarding for the summer, to attend a *sotée dansante*, to occur in that week, Thursday night. And this was Tuesday; and in so few hours he would see her—this fair girl who was the ideal of all that was royally perfect in womanhood; this bright, star-eyed girl, whom he hoped, so fondly, so proudly, to make his wife, his—

An exclamation from Baldwin suddenly and ruthlessly scattered his rose-hued reverie.

"By the holy pipe-stem! Look here, Howland—just look here! If here isn't the most angelic face I ever saw in the whole course of my natural existence! So there's no 'genuine delicate-souled girl' among my unknown correspondents, eh? I'd stake my salvation on such a face as that. It is the embodiment of all that's good, and pure, and modest, and refined. And she signs 'Jewel'—such a dainty name!"

Howland smiled at Baldwin's enthusiastic face and eloquent words.

"Actually a photograph? Confirmation strong as proof of holy writ that the sender is a grade lower than all the rest—no matter how fair her face is. 'Jewel'—you said? Pretty fancy—I know a young lady whose name really is that of a precious stone."

"But just see for yourself, man," insisted Baldwin, excitedly. "I tell you she's an angel—a veritable 'jewel' despite your cold criticisms. See for yourself."

He handed Howland the photograph, who lazily extended his hand for it, with a faint smile of pitying contempt on his mouth, and a slight shade of annoyance in his handsome eyes.

"To please you, Baldwin, I'll look at your unknown divin—"

He paused so abruptly that it startled Baldwin.

Then, in a strange, unnatural voice, with a face that was whitely-anguishful, he spoke:

"This came to *St. John Vincent*, in a letter signed 'Jewel,' from—what place?"

He held the beautiful face with quivering fingers, and stared at it with mingled wrath and sorrow in his eyes.

"From 'Elmgrove, New Jersey.' Will you read the letter?"

Howland took it, and read it without a word, his face occasionally convulsing as he came to some light, foolish word of badinage, or an intimation for an answer.

Then he handed it back, in a way that made Baldwin wonder what it all meant.

"Do you know her? Have you seen her—tell me, Howland, what it is about?"

Howland's lip curled as he gazed at the picture, but it contrasted oddly with the pain on his face, the mute sorrow and disappointment in his grave eyes.

"If you will give me this photograph I will thank you all the days of my life. It means very little—except that the brightest dream of my life has closed. May I have it?"

There was something in his manner, in its proud honesty, its pitiful bravery that touched Baldwin.

"You may have it. After all—this nonsense is merely folly—every letter shall be burned, every address lost forever. If I had taken your advice, Howland, you at least would have been spared this."

Howland laid the card in his check-book—with a tenderness that made Baldwin's heart ache.

"Perhaps it is for the best that one should know the exact value of their 'Jewel' before it is placed in its setting. Remember it isn't your fault, only my misfortune."

He lit a second cigar, and went out into the street, heartsick, and lonely; yet with an indignation in his breast that refused to be quieted.

"How could she? and she will be just as gentle and reserved and dainty in word and movement if I see her Thursday night as though she had never stooped to such an act. I'll never see her again—never! I'll drive her from my memory, and—no, I will see her again, and with this witness of her vulgarity in my possession, her own perceptive face, I'll watch her and scorn her away, winsome ways."

But, despite his resolution, Clare Howland carried a leaden heart in his breast over which lay the sweet, unconscious face of Ruby Delamere.

She was surpassing fair, dressed in a trailing robe of white tissue, with the overdress looped in irregularly graceful intervals with water-lilies. A tiny bud and leaf was in her flowing golden hair, and another at her round white throat, where a filmy lace ruff lay caressingly.

She had taken especial pains to-night, because he was coming before whom she desired to look her best; and when, her toilet completed, she stood, with wood-rose-hued cheeks, and a luster of happy expectation in her brown eyes, even Blanche Lambert felt constrained to pass favorable judgment.

"You have exceeded yourself to-night, Ruby. Mr. Howland will be more deeply smitten than ever."

She turned away with a pang of envy; before Ruby could reply, and called to one of the servants who passed the door:

"Ralph—is there no letter yet for Miss Jewel?"

"None, Miss Blanche."

She turned away with a half-disappointed sigh, just as Ruby came down the stairs.

"Let's go in together, and see who's arrived. I know who I'd like to see—Mr. St. John Vincent—my unknown friend, you know."

Ruby's eyes darkened for an instant—it was

the first time the subject had been reverted to; then she found herself bowing to a gentleman directly in front of her—Clare Howland.

Her cheeks flushed, and almost timidly she extended her hand—looking so exquisitely fair that the man's heart throbbed with pain.

"I am so glad you have come! This is Miss Lambert. Blanche, allow me to introduce Mr. Howland."

He bowed, then turned to a friend by his side.

"Mr. Baldwin, Miss Delamere, Miss Lambert. A friend I took the liberty of bringing."

He was courteous as usual, but—there was a heartiness lacking, and it went to Ruby's very heart.

She lifted her wistful eyes, so pure, so girlish, and when they met his, so cold, contemptuous, an involuntary cry came to her lips.

"Baldwin—take Miss Lambert for the Lancers, and I will have a promenade with Miss Ruby—if she will allow me the honor."

The emphasis on the last word was unobserved save by the girl herself. Her brown eyes flashed, and as the other couple walked off, and Howland offered his arm, she bowed a cold declination.

"Thank you, no. There is something wrong between you and I; and unless I know what it is, I must refuse you the honor of my society."

Howland was stung by her cutting words, but he only smiled icily.

"Miss Delamere—there is something wrong, and I will be bold enough to say that while forty-eight hours ago I was the happiest, proudest man alive, in believing I could win you for my wife—to-night I feel you are unworthy the love of any man."

Ruby listened like one in a trance; her cheeks grown whiter and whiter, her slender form swaying like a tempest-riven flower.

Her eyes were riveted on his face in an expression of surprise, indignation, pain; but not a word passed her lips until he had finished.

"I do not understand you. Take me to another room, and explain."

She was perfectly self-possessed, and for the first time a horrid suspicion seized him that possibly there had been a mistake somewhere.

"Miss Delamere—if I was harsh, if I am harsh, remember it is a fearful thing to have one's idol dethroned; remember how I loved you, and then listen while I tell you how I felt when, among hundreds of letters in answer to a matrimonial advertisement of a frivolous young friend of mine, who has repented his foolishness, I found your face, your photograph, in a letter signed 'Jewel' and post-marked from this village. Imagine, if you can, my horror, my disappointment; and be assured I would sacrifice years of my life to know you were guiltless of such terrible impropriety."

Ruby had listened, with her lips compressed, her eyes glowing, her color rapidly returning, until two crimson flames burned on either cheek.

"Mr. Howland, the confession with which you preluded your charge against me alone makes me willing to assure you I never sent my picture in a letter to a stranger. I could explain to your perfect satisfaction, but I am as indignant at your conduct as you were at my supposed imprudence."

She arose from her seat, in a dignity and silence that stamped truthfulness on her words, and was passing from the room.

"Miss Delamere—Ruby—no! do not leave me! Remember what I told you—remember I am a proud man, and you shouldn't blame me! I am a proud man, and I love you so dearly!"

"And I am a proud woman, Mr. Howland, unused either to stooping to the meanness you thought me guilty of, or of unmasking one who did the deed. Sufficient to me is the reward of a good conscience."

She was so fair, so proud, so true.

"Ruby—my jewel—forgive me! let me beg on my knees for pardon, and for your love!"

And—well, she loved him, and she could afford to forgive him, honoring him, in her heart, for his views.

Five minutes later, when Howland's arm was around her neck, and her face upturned to his, Blanche Lambert came in, with set lips and resolute eyes.

"Don't resolve for me—I came to confess it all. I heard Ruby's noble refusal to cast the blame where it belongs, but she shall be vindicated. Mr. Howland, after Ruby had made me desperately angry by refusing to countenance me in my act, I purposely sent her picture as a revenge on her, and signed a name that was suggested by her own. Will you forgive me?"

Two years afterward, when Mrs. Howland and her adoring husband received cards for the wedding of Frank Baldwin and Blanche Lambert, they decided that, after all, the little escapade had resulted better than it deserved.

Victoria:

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE CLIFFE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL MYSTERY," "THE RIVAL BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

BARBARA.

THE Cliffons were over and well over, but at least one-third of the pleasure-seekers went home disappointed. The races had been successful; the weather propitious; but one great point of attraction had mysteriously disappeared—after the first day, the Infant Venus vanished and was seen no more.

The mob had gone wild about her, and had besieged the theater clamorously next day; but when another and very clumsy Venus was substituted, and she was not to be found, the manager nearly had his theater pulled down about his ears, in their angry disappointment. None could tell what had become of her, except, perhaps, Mr. Sweet—which prudent gentleman enchanted the race-ground no longer with his presence but devoted himself exclusively to a little business of his own.

It was a sweltering August evening. The sun, that had throbbed and blazed all day like a great heart of fire in a cloudless sky, was going slowly down behind the Sussex hills, but a few vagrant wandering sunbeams lingered still on the open window, and along the carpeted floor, in an upper room in the Cliffe Arms. It was a small room, with an attic roof—stiffing hot just now, and filled with reeking fumes of tobacco; for Mr. Peter Black sat near the empty fire-place, smoking like a volcano.

There were two ladies in the room; but, despite their presence and the suffocating atmosphere, Mr. Black kept his hat on, for the wear-

ing of which article of dress he partly atoned by being in his shirt-sleeves, and very much out at the elbows at that. One of these ladies, rather stricken in years, exceedingly crooked, exceedingly yellow, and with an exceedingly sharp and vicious expression generally, sat on a low stool opposite him; her skinny elbows on her knees, her skinny chin in her hands, and her small, rat-like eyes transfixed him with an unwinking stare. The second lady—a youthful angel arrayed in faded gauze, ornamented with tawdry ribbons and tarnished tinsel—stood by the open window, trying to catch the slightest breeze, but no breeze stirred the stagnant air of the sweltering August afternoon.

It was the Infant Venus, of course—looking like anything just now, however, but a Venus in her shabby dress, her uncombed and tangled profusion of hair, and the scowl that darkened the pretty face. There never was greater unadorned being adorned the most.

Beauty in satin and diamonds is infinitely more beautiful than the same in linsey-woolsey, and the caterpillar with sulky face and frowed hair, looking out of the window, was no more like the golden butterfly, wreathed and smiling on the tight-rope, than a real caterpillar is like a real butterfly.

In fact, none of the three appeared to be in the best of humors: the man looked dogged and scowling; the old woman fierce and wrathful, and the girl gloomy and sullen. They had been in exactly the same position for at least two hours without speaking, when the girl suddenly turned round from the window, with flashing eyes and fiery face.

"Father, I want to know how long we are to be kept roasting alive in this place? If you don't let me out, I will jump out of the window to-night, though I break my neck for it!"

"Do, and be hanged," growled Mr. Black, sulkily, without looking up.

"What have we come here for at all? Why have we left the theater?"

"Find out!" said Mr. Black, laconically.

The girl's eyes flamed, and her hands clenched, but the old woman interposed.

"Barbara, you're a fool! and her hands ask more questions in a minute than a wise man can answer in a day. We have come here for your good, and—there's a knock—open the door."

"It's that yellow old ogre again," muttered Barbara, going to the door. "I know he's at the bottom of all this, and I should like to scratch his eyes out—I should!"

She unlocked the door as she uttered the gentle wish; and the yellow old ogre, in the person of the ever-smiling Mr. Sweet, stepped in. Certainly he was smiling just now—quite radiantly, in fact; and his waistcoat, and whiskers, and hair, and profusion of jewelry, seemed to scintillate sparks of sunshine and smile, too.

"And how does my charming little Venus find herself this warm evening—blossoming as a rose-bud, I hope"—he began, chucking her playfully under the chin—and the dear old lady quite well and cheerful, I trust; and you, my dear old boy, always smoking and enjoying yourself after your own fashion. How do you all do?"

By way of answer, the charming little Venus writhed herself angrily from his grasp; the dear old lady gave him a malignant glance out of her weird eyes, and the dear old boy smoked on with a steady scowl, and never looked up.

"All silent!" said Mr. Sweet, drawing up a chair, and looking silently round. "Why, that's odd, too! Barbara, my dear, will you tell me what is the matter?"

Barbara faced round from the window with rather discomposing suddenness, not to say fierceness.

"The matter is, Mr. Sweet, that I'm about tired of being cooped up in this hot hole, and if I don't get out by fair means, I will by foul, and that before long. What have you brought us here for. You needn't deny it, I know you have brought us here!"

"Quite right, Miss Barbara. It was I!"

"Then I wish you had just minded your own business, and let us alone. Come, let me out, or I vow I shall jump out of the window, if I break every bone in my body."

"My dear Miss Barbara, I admire your spirit and courage, but let us do nothing rash. If I have brought you here, it is for your good, and you will thank me for it one day!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind; and you won't thank yourself either, if you don't let me out pretty soon. What do you mean, sir, by interfering with us, when we weren't interfering with you?"

"Barbara, hold your tongue!" again the old lady sharply up in. "Her tongue is longer than the rest of her body, Mr. Sweet, and you mustn't mind her. How dare you speak so disrespectful to the gentleman, you minx!"

"You needn't call either of us names, grandmother," said Barbara, quite as sharply as the old lady herself, and with a spectral flash out of her weird dark eyes. "I shouldn't think you and father would be such fools as to be ordered about by an old lawyer, who had better be minding his own affairs, if he has any to mind!"

Mr. Peter Black, smoking stolidly, still chuckled grimly under his unshaven beard at his small daughter's large spirit; and Mr. Sweet looked at her with mild reproach.

"Gently, gently, Miss Barbara! you think too fast! As you have guessed, it is I who have brought you here, and it is, I repeat, for your good. I saw you at the races, and liked you—and who could help doing that—and I determined you should not pass your life in such low drudgery; for I swear you were born for a lady, and shall be one! Miss Barbara, you are a great deal too beautiful for so public and dangerous a life, and I repeat again, you shall be a lady yet!"

"How?" said Barbara, a little mollified, like all of her sex, by the flattery.

"Well, in the first place, you shall be educated; your father shall have a more respectable situation than that of ticket-porter to a band of strolling players; and, lastly, when you have grown up, I shall perhaps make you—my little wife!"

Mr. Sweet laughed pleasantly, but Barbara shrugged her shoulders, and turned away with infinite contempt.

"Oh, thank you! I shall never be a lady in that case, I am afraid! You may keep your fine promises, Mr. Sweet, for those who like them, and let me go back to the theater."

"My dear child, when you see the pretty cottage I have for you to live in, and the fine dresses you shall have, and all the friends you will make, you will think differently of it. I am aware this is not the most comfortable place in the world, but I came up for the express purpose of telling you you are to leave here to-night. Yes, my good Black, you will hold yourself in readiness to-night to quit this for your future home."

Mr. Black took his pipe out of his mouth and looked up for the first time.

"Where's that?" he gruffly asked.

"Down in Tower Cliffe, the fishing-village below here, and I have found you the nicest cottage ever you saw, where you can live as comfortably as a king!"

"And that respectable occupation of yours—perhaps it's a lawyer's clerk you want to make of me! I'm not over particular, Lord knows! but I don't want to come to that!"

"My dear Black, don't be sarcastic, if you can help it! Your occupation shall be one of the oldest and most respectable—a profession apostles followed—that of a fisherman, you know."

"I don't know anything about the apostles," said Mr. Black, gruffly. "And I know less about being a fisherman. Why don't you set me up for a milliner, or a lady's maid, at once?"

"My dear friend, I am afraid you got out of the wrong side of the bed this morning, you're so uncommon savage; but I can overlook that and the few other defects you are troubled with, as people overlook spots on the sun. As to the fishing, you'll soon learn all you want to know, which won't be much; and as you will never want a guinea while I have one in my purse, you need never shorten your days by hard work. In three hours from now—that is, at nine o'clock—I will be here with a conveyance to bear you to your new home. And now," said Mr. Sweet, rising, "as much as I regret it, I must tear myself away; for I have an engagement with my lady at the Castle in half an hour. By the way, have you heard the news of what happened at the Castle the other day?"

"How should we hear it?" said Mr. Black, sulkily. "Do you suppose the birds of the air would fly in with news; and you took precious good care that none should reach us any other way?"

"True! I might have known you would not hear it, but it is a mere trifle after all. The only son of Lady Agnes Shirley has returned home, after an absence of twelve years, and all Cliftonlea is ringing with the news. Perhaps you would like to hear the story, my good Judith," said Mr. Sweet, leaning smilingly over his chair, and fixing his eyes full on the skinny face of the old woman.

"It is quite a romance, I assure you. A little over thirteen years ago, this young man, Cliffe Shirley, made a low marriage, a French actress, very good, very pretty, but a nobody, you know. Actresses are always nobodies!"

"And lawyers are something worse!" interrupted Barbara, facing indignantly around. "I would thank you to mind what you say about actresses, Mr. Sweet."

The lawyer bowed in deprecation to the little vixen.

"Your pardon, Miss Barbara. I hold myself rebuked. When my lady heard the story, her wrath, I am told, was terrific. She comes of an old and fiery race, you see, and

rooms opening off it—one occupied by the old woman Judith, the other by Barbara; and Mr. Peter Black courted repose in a loft above.

The little dancing-girl, much as she had regretted being taken away from her theater at first, grew reconciled to her new home in a wonderfully short space of time. Mr. Sweet had given her a boat—the daintiest little skiff that ever was seen—painted black, with a crimson streak running round it, and the name "Barbara" printed in crimson letters on the stern. And before she had been living two days in the cottage, Barbara had learned to row. There must have been some wild blood in the girl's veins, for she lived out of doors from morning till night, like a gipsy—climbing up impassable places like a cat—making the acquaintance of everybody in the village, and taking to the water like a duck. Out long before the sun rose red over the sea, and out until the stars sparkled on the waves, the child, who had been cooped up all her life in dingy, grimy city walls, drank in the resounding sea-side wind, as if it had been the elixir of life, went dancing over the marshes gathering bouquets of the tall, rank, reedy blossoms, and blue rockets, singing as she went, springing from jag to jag along the dizzy cliffs, with the wind in her teeth, and her pretty brown hair blowing in the breeze behind her. It was a new world to Barbara.

Mr. Sweet was certainly the most benevolent of men. He not only paid the rent for the tenants in the seaside cottage, but he bought and paid for the furniture himself, and made Barbara new presents every day. And Barbara took his presents—his pretty boat, the new dresses, the rich fruits and flowers from the conservatories and parterres of the castle and liked the gifts immensely, and began to look even with a little complacency on the giver. But being of an intensely jealous nature, with the wildest dreams of ambition in her childish head, and the most passionate and impetuous of tempers, she never got on very friendly terms with any one. Barbara certainly was half a barbarian. She had not apparently the slightest affection either for father or grandmother; and if she had a heart, it lay dormant yet, and the girl loved nobody but herself. Mr. Sweet studied her profoundly, but she puzzled him. Scarcely a day passed but he was at the cottage—taking the trouble to walk down from his own handsome house in Cliftonlee; and Barbara was never displeased to see him, because his hands or his pockets had always something good for her.

One evening, long after sunset, Mr. Sweet turned down the rocky road leading to the fisherman's cottage. A high wind was surging over the sea, and rendering it necessary for him to clutch his hat with both hands to prevent its blowing into the regions of space; the sky was of a leaden gray, with bars of hard red in the west, and the waves cannonaded the shore with a roar like thunder. No one was abroad. At the village, all were at supper. But Mr. Sweet looked anxiously for a lithe, girlish figure, bounding from rock to rock as if treading on air—a sight he very often saw when traveling down that road. No such figure was flying along, however, in the high gale this evening; and while he watched for it over the cliffs and sand-hills, his foot stumbled against something lying in the sand, with its head pillowed in the midst of the reeds and rushes. The recumbent figure instantly sprang erect, with angry exclamations, and he saw the sunburnt face of her he was looking for. Something had evidently gone wrong, for the bright face looked dark and sullen; and she began instantly, and with asperity, the attack.

"What are you about, Mr. Sweet, tramping on people with your great feet, as if they were made of cast-iron?"

"My dear Miss Barbara, I beg a thousand pardons! I really never saw you."

"Oh! you didn't? You're going blind, I suppose! But it's always the way! I never go anywhere for peace but you or somebody else is sure to come bothering!"

With which Barbara sat upright, a very cross scowl disfiguring her pretty face, and gathering up the profusion of her brown hair, tangled among the reeds and thistles, began pushing it away under her gipsy hat. Mr. Sweet took a bunch of luscious grapes out of his pocket, and laid them, by way of a peace-offering, in her lap.

"What's the matter with my little Barbara? Something is wrong."

"No, there isn't," said Barbara, snappishly, and without condescending to notice the grapes.

"Nothing wrong?"

"What have you been about all day?"

"Nothing!"

"Your general occupation, I believe! Has the dear old lady been scolding?"

"No! And I shouldn't care if she had!"

"Have you been to supper?"

"No."

"How long have you been lying here?"

"I don't know. I wish you wouldn't torment me with questions."

Mr. Sweet laughed, but he went on perseveringly, determined to get at the bottom of Barbara's fit of ill-humor.

"Were you in Cliftonlee this afternoon?"

The right spring was touched—Barbara sprang up with flashing eyes.

"Yes, I was in Cliftonlee, and I'm never go there again! There was everybody making such fools of themselves over that little pink-and-white wax doll from France, just as if she were a queen! She and that cousin of hers—that tall fellow they call Tom Shirley—were riding through the town; she on her white pony, with her blue-riding-habit and black hat, yellow curls, and baby face, and everybody running out to see them, and the women dropping curtsies, and the men taking off their hats as they passed. Bah! it was enough to make one sick!"

Mr. Sweet suppressed a whistle and a laugh. Envy, and jealousy, and pride, as usual, were at the bottom of Miss Barbara's ill-temper, for the humble fisherman's girl had within her a consuming fire—the fire of a fierce and indomitable pride. He laid his hand on her shoulder, and looked at her passionate face with a smile.

"They are right, my dear! She is the richest of heiresses, and the Princess of Sussex! What would you give to change places with her, Barbara?"

"Don't ask me what I would give!" said Barbara, fiercely. "I would give my life, my soul, if I could use it, as I have read of men doing; but it's no use talking; I am nothing but a miserable pauper, and always shall be."

The lawyer was habitually calm, and had wonderful self-possession; but now his yellow face actually flushed, his small eyes kindled, and the smile on his face was like the gleam of a dagger.

"No, Barbara!" he cried, almost hissing the words between his shut teeth; "a time will come when you will hold your head a thousand times higher than that yellow-haired upstart! Trust to me, Barbara, and you shall be a lady yet."

He turned away, humming as he went,

"There's a good time coming, wait a little longer." And walking much faster than was his decorous want, he passed the cottage and entered the park-gates, evidently on his way to the castle.

Barbara looked after him for a moment a little surprised; and then becoming aware that the night was falling, the sea rising, and the wind raging, darted along the rocks, and watched, with a sort of gloomy pleasure, the wild waves dashing themselves frantically along their dark sides.

"What a night it will be, and how the minute-guns will sound before morning!" she said, speaking to herself and the elements. "And how the surf will boil in the Demon's Tower, when the tide rises! I will go and have a look before I go in."

Over the rocks she flew, her hands on her sides; her long hair and short dress streaming in the gale; her eyes and cheeks kindling with excitement at the wild scene and hour. The Demon's Tower was much more easily scaled from without than within, and the little tight-rope dancer could almost tread on air.

So she flew up the steep sides, hand over hand, swiftly as a sailor climbs the rigging, and reached the top, breathless and flushed. Pushing away the hair that the wind was blowing into her eyes, she looked down, expecting to hear nothing but the echo of the blast, and see the spray fly in showers, when, to her boundless astonishment, she heard instead a sharp cry, and saw two human figures kneeling on the stone floor, and a third falling back from the side with a crash.

Barbara was, for a moment, mute with amazement; the next, she had comprehended the whole thing instinctively, and found her voice. Leaning over the dizzy height, she shouted at the top of her clear lungs:

"Hallo!"

The voice, clear as a bugle-blast, reached the ears of one of the kneeling figures. It was Vivia, and she looked up to see a weird face, with streaming hair and dark eyes, looking down at her, in the ghastly evening light.

"Hallo!" repeated Barbara, leaning further over. "What in the world are you doing down there? Don't you know you'll be drowned?"

Vivia sprang to her feet and held up her arms with a wild cry.

"Oh, save us! save us! save us!"

"Yes, I will; just wait five minutes!" exclaimed Barbara, who, in the excitement of the moment, forgot everything but their danger.

"I'll save you if I drown for it."

Down the rocky sides of the tower she went as she had never gone before, bruising her hands till they bled, without feeling the pain. Over the craggy peak, like an arrow from a bow, and down to a small sheltered cove between two projecting cliffs, where her little black and red boat, with its oars within it, lay safely moored.

In an instant the boat was untied, Barbara leaped in, and shoved off, seated herself in the thwart and took the oars. It was a task of no slight danger, for outside the little cove the waves ran high; but Barbara had never thought of danger—never thought of anything, but that three persons were drowning within the Demon's Cave.

The little skiff rode the waves like a cockle-shell; and the girl, as she bent the oars, had to stoop her head low to avoid the spray being dashed in her face. The evening, too, was rapidly darkening; the fierce bars of red had died out in the ghastly sky, and great drops of rain began splashing on the angry and heaving sea. The tide had risen so quickly that the distance to the cavern was an ominous length, and Barbara had never been in such weather before, but still the brave girl kept on undismayed, and reached it at last, just as the waves were beginning to wash the stone floor.

The boat shot on through the black arch, stopping beside the prostrate figure of Tom, and their rescuer sprang out, striving to recognize them in the gloom.

"Is he dead?" was her first question, looking down at the recumbent figure.

"Not quite!" said Tom, feebly, but with strength enough in his voice to put the matter beyond all doubt. "Who are you?"

"Barbara Black. Who are you?"

"Tom Shirley—what's left of me! Help those two into the boat, and then I'll try to follow them up before we all drown here."

"In with you, then!" cried Barbara.

And Margaret at once obeyed, but Vivia held back.

"No, not until you get in first, Tom! Help me to raise him, please. I am afraid he is badly hurt."

Barbara obeyed, and with much trouble and more than one involuntary groan from Tom, the feat was accomplished, and he was safely lying in the bottom. Then the two girls followed him, and soon the little black and red boat was tossing over the surges, guided through the deepening darkness by Barbara's elastic arms.

But the task was a hard one; more than once Margaret's shrieks of terror had rung out on the wind; and more than once Barbara's brave heart had grown chill with fear; but some good angel guarded the frail skiff, and it was moored safely in its own little cove at last. Not, however, until night had fallen in the very blackness of darkness, and the rain was sweeping over the sea in drenching torrents. Barbara sprang out and secured her boat as it had been before.

"Now, then, we are all safe at last!" she cried. "And as he can't walk, you two must stay with him until I come back with help. Don't be afraid. I won't be gone long."

She was not long gone, certainly. Fifteen minutes had not elapsed until she was back with her father and another fisherman she had met on the way. But every second had seemed an hour to the three cowering in the boat, with the rain beating pitilessly on their heads. Barbara carried a dark-lantern; and, by its light, the two men lifted Tom and bore him between them toward the cottage, while Barbara went slowly before, carrying the lantern, and with Vivia and Margaret each clinging to an arm.

A bright wood-fire was blazing on the cottage hearth when they entered; for though the month was September, Judith's bones were old and chill, and Judith sat crouching over it now, while she waited for their coming. The dripping procession entered, and Vivia thought it the pleasantest thing she had ever seen even at Castle Cliff.

A wooden settle stood before it—Tom was placed thereon, and Margaret dropped down beside it, exhausted and panting; and Vivia and Barbara stood opposite and looked at each other across the hearth. Vivia's rich silk dress hung dripping and clammy around her; and her long white curls were drenched with rain and sea-spray. Barbara recognized her instantly, and so did the fisherman who had helped her father to carry Tom.

"It is Miss Shirley and Master Tom!" he cried out. "Oh, whatever will my lady say?"

Old Judith started up with a shrill scream, and darted forward.

"Miss Shirley, the heiress! Which of them is her?"

"I am," said Vivia, turning her clear blue eyes on the wrinkled face with the simple dignity natural to her; "and you must have word sent to the castle immediately."

Old Judith, shaking like one in an ague fit, and looking from one to the other, stood grasping the back of the settle for support. There they were, facing each other for the first time, and neither dreaming how darkly their destinies were to be interlinked—neither the dark-browed dancing girl, nor the sunny-haired heiress of Castle Cliff.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 269.)

The Terrible Truth:

OR,
THE THORNHURST MYSTERY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,

AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "THE FALSE WIDOW," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CORAL AND RUBY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A COMPACT.

"Of what are you thinking, Nora?"

Nora was nestled among the satin cushions of a dormer, the lace window-curtains sifting soft shadows upon her bright head and fair face, her chin in her hand, her eyes looking far away over the gay throng crowding the beach to the dazzling blue of the ocean, dotted with a picturesque sail here and there, with pleasure-boats like tiny-winged birds skimming its surface. It was the Brighton of America, Long Branch, and it was near the close of the brilliant season which repeats itself in endless variation year after year.

Three years before Colonel Vivian had brought Nora home to Thornhurst, a willowy slender girl, her graceful little head crowned with long straight silky hair of a most obnoxious color to her own eyes, fresh from boarding-school and new to the world. Bright, willfully spirited, her beauty had created a sensation then, with the promise of greater brilliancy to come with time. The promise had been fulfilled in the three years past. She was taller, hers was a slender shape still, but with a bearing gained which might have graced a princess of blue old royalty, hair of the darkest auburn rippled back from the broad white forehead, and her face—it was one of those faces which may be seen but not described.

An admirer attempting to describe her once said:

"When she sweeps into the room you have a momentary glimpse of fair, clear-cut features, a red firm line of lip and rounded chin, you have a vision of the Madonna in marble rise up before you, you think her too perfect and too cold, but the long dark lashes quiver, you look into fathomless brown eyes, soft as velvet and bright as stars. You see nothing more, and unless you are an uncommon man you can never look at her with critical eyes again after being dazzled by that first glance."

Such, the bells of this season as she was of last, was Nora Carteret then.

"Of what am I thinking, Mrs. Grahame? I was dreaming over my letter."

She lifted a white creamy sheet from her lap, the bold masculine chirography visible to Mrs. Grahame's sharp eyes half-way across the room.

"It is from Sir Rupert. He is coming North, this fall, is on his way now, I presume. He has been in Mexico and Central America, and says he yields to duty now not preference in turning his back upon his independent, adventurous life of the last two years. Here is what he writes:

"I came to America, limiting my intended stay to ten months. I have been here three years, for the greater part of that time indulging my taste for wandering, hunting wild buffaloes and being hunted by wilder Indians on the wide-roving prairies of the West, climbing the grand, hoary old mountains, exploring the gold-veined regions of California, and drifting gradually southward to these unsettled dominions where you might suppose my adventures had been halfhearted and frequent enough to satisfy the most daring, much less a peaceable and ease-loving individual such as I claim to be. But I fear myself away from the fastidions of this rule life with deep regret. Here is a tropical climate, but relieved from oppressiveness, a soil which produces voluntarily the richest fruits of the earth, a natural garden of Eden, but unfortunately inhabited by a people who neither know how to govern themselves nor submit to government, whose incessant revolts make it dangerous for strangers, where no man can trust his neighbor, no one be secure from petty depredations. I leave it all, however, not from choice, but because Archer Hall must be left to me. I have decided to be a landlord to my tenants, a worthy representative of the Archers dead and gone, and though I have full faith in my trustworthiness I am not sure that I have lived to the satisfaction of my duty."

"And so," concluded Nora, "he expects to be in New York before the middle of October, next month. We must go back to the city in time to meet him there, Mrs. Grahame."

"What an odd girl you are, Nora. Sir Rupert must consider you so, to write that style of a dry, technical letter."

"Dry!" cried Nora, indignantly. "It is full of interest. I am glad that Sir Rupert Archer does think well enough of me to spare me the sort of wishy-washy missives some gentlemen consider all that can reach the comprehension of their lady acquaintances. As to being odd, I wouldn't be any one else than I am, Nora Carteret, free and independent that is to be very soon, for all the world."

"I've always wondered," continued Mrs. Grahame, "whether or not you threw over the baronet. He was certainly very attentive at one time, and I thought—at least I hoped you were going to do credit to the opportunity."

You have rejected a dozen of eligible offers since, and I have been quite awhile intending to ask you, has it really been on account of the baronet?"

"Oh, Mrs. Grahame! Throw over the baronet! Sir Rupert is too sensible a man to be thrown over, by far too sensible to have bestowed a thought on me, in that way. He is almost the only man who never made me silly speeches, who took it as a matter of course that I was clever enough to understand the plain English of plain topics. Don't undertake match-making for me. I have laid out a different course for myself, and your well-meant plans are sure to be disappointments to yourself."

"Really, Miss Nora Carteret, you can be self-willed and aggravating as a spoiled child. If the baronet should be coming back here, for the precise purpose of making the proposal he has not made yet—if he should wish to take you back to England with him, you surely never will be so crazy as to throw away the chance! Think how it would sound to be my Lady Archer, of Archer Hall."

"You are determined not to believe what I say, that Sir Rupert will never give me the chance, and that I am glad through knowing it."

"With all his letters to you and yours to him I have had grounds for hoping better."

"I told you the object of our correspondence once, Mrs. Grahame. If Vane should come back or if either should hear from him it was

that the other might know at once. It is very strange that we never should have heard from or of him."

"By no means very strange. I can only wonder at your persistency in clinging to that thought, Nora; the more especially of your singular faith in a possibility which is contradicted by all evidence of appearance. The best you could wish for that depraved and criminal young man, if not already dead, is that he may be so dead to the world which knew him once he might never be heard of again. It sickens me to think of the weather. Are you going to drive this afternoon, Nora? You have only a half-hour in which to dress."

"Not if you will hold me excused. It is hot as August, and much pleasanter here in neglect than grilling under that sun in full toilet."

"Nora! Have you forgotten the races? And that the favorite entry is decked with your color, and that the result will be the same as a personal victory to whose ever color wins! I especially desire that you shall drive this afternoon, and if you could rouse yourself from that supreme indifference to all sub-lunar objects and enjoyments for this one occasion, it will be a matter of gratification to me. It is well to carry yourself above enthusiasm; too vociferous expression is never in good taste; but you are apt to go to the further extreme. There, I will ring for Corinne for you, and pray make haste."

Mrs. Grahame touched the bell-pull as she swept out, herself already in full carriage-dress; but it is a half-hour's task for a lady of forty-five to adjust last touches before her glass, to settle her bonnet, to draw her veil to the proper angle, to modify years which never set more hardly or leave more vivid traces than in this hollow fashionable life.

It was hot, that late September afternoon. A hazy cloud or two floated close to the horizon, and a great fiery sun looked down from the jacinth vault above into another jacinth vault with another fiery orb reflected in the sea below; the sun beat upon the sands and upon the gayly-dressed throng, ladies in carriages, gentlemen in the saddle, mounted on benches, or pressed in a tight, perspiring crowd about the course.

"For my part," said Nora, looking out from the shade of her parasol, a dainty, diminutive concern of violet silk and foamy white lace, "I have far more sympathy with the splendid animals to exert themselves here, than for all that mass of miserable, dusty, scorching human-kind. And I have no doubt, the poor things absolutely believe they are enjoying themselves. I take my own punishment for participating with a good grace, just as we all accept the inevitable retribution which follows close upon our everyday faults. I suppose the recording angel would have too much business on hand to put down the whole score, and we ought to be thankful the greater number of our transgressions which recoil upon us here below."

"My dear," reproved Mrs. Grahame, virtuously shocked.

"Where is justice if Miss Carteret is not spared the penalty?" murmured a masculine voice at her side. "I thought that angels had no faults."

Miss Carteret looked around with coolly surprised glance. Dare had pressed up close, on the back of a magnificent bay.

"Oh, you!" she said, frostily. "I was not aware you were here."

"Nor glad of it?" There was a reproach in the murmur now. "I would not for half a world have missed this occasion."

"And I would have missed it most gladly but for Mrs. Grahame's pertinacity." She leaned back in her seat, softly swaying her fan, watching the ring as the richly-caparisoned horses were led in, as thoroughly unconcerned as though Owen Dare had been a thousand miles away instead of at her elbow. He should have grown accustomed to disdainful treatment such as this, but it made him secretly grit his teeth, nevertheless. Time had not decreased the resolve he had once taken; he had not lost sight of it for one day or hour; he had steeled himself as he always did in a delay, he had become inflexible as iron in the purpose nearest his crafty, selfish heart. He had been horribly patient, these last two years; he had found his advances repelled, and he had waited his time—the time near at hand now, a thought of which would bring a flush to his cheek, a glitter to his eyes that had never failed before in finding a mastery in their soft, false expression.

"The time is coming," he thought, looking down upon the proud head, the listless shape, "and when it does come, I scarcely know which would give me the greatest pleasure—to win you or crush you. For the sake of Thornhurst it shall be the first, and because I have no reasonable hope of effecting the last."

"There is blue—blue is your color, Miss Carteret—and Rose, and White," he leaned forward to say. "Is that all? Then the tricolor has withdrawn. Do you know that I have departed from a fixed principle in honor of the day? Betting is my abhorrence, but I have been betting on the Blue. Are you willing to wager a box of gloves against your own color?"

"By no means, Mr. Dare. Fixed principles should be observed, and I could not reconcile my conscience in accepting your introduction to a vice you abhor."

"As a vice. In the way of compliment it is another thing."

This required no reply, and Miss Carteret was accordingly silent.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs. Grahame, whose view was obstructed. "To whom are you talking, Nora?" Nora drooped her parasol, and Dare pressed his horse forward a pace.

"Oh, you, Owen! I don't suppose there's anything amiss. When did you come down?"

"By the afternoon train, less than two hours ago. The occasion called me, of course, and I am at hand to congratulate the winner. The idea is not a bad one, this way of deciding between the reigning belles, though it may be borrowed from our English cousins, and in my opinion the issue need not have been contested at all."

"We are to see more of you than this?"

"To your sorrow," laughed Dare. "I have a message for your own private ear, Mrs. Grahame."

"Ah, well!" The lady gave him a sharp glance, but settled back complacently and raised her glass. The money market had been more than usually tight of late, and it had come to be such a chronic disease in the Grahame establishment to be hard up that the lift conveyed by Colonel Vivian's will proved but a temporary alleviation. The mansion had been fitted anew from roof to cellar when it was again open to company. The dollars had run out in a steady stream, until of late a stern check had been put upon the lavish outlay. Mrs. Grahame was finding herself hampered here in this expensive resort. She had sent a telegram that very morning for additional funds, and shrewdly guessed that Dare had brought down the reply. It would

doubtless have been a trying position for many a woman, but it was an old story to her. She was schooled against suspense as well as all the trepidations and flutterings that common natures are heir to.

Meanwhile the horses had been trotted gently round the track, betting-books figured conspicuously in the first circle; then with favors glistening in the sun, with arching necks and glossy coats, the racers were drawn head and head at the starting-place. The word was given, and they were off like arrows from a bow.

"White is ahead, but that signifies nothing; Blue next, and Rose in the rear."

"Another fifty on the Rose for all that."

"Do you bet, Dare? Ten on the White to five for the others."

"I'm not a betting man, but I'll go a fifty on the Blue!"

"Cigar money for a fortnight," laughed the other. "You're out for your trifle, old fellow."

"The result will show."

"Rose gains! Hurrah for Rose!"

Rose did gain, passed the blue on the first heat, and at the close of the second was neck and neck with the White.

"Dear, dear me, Nora, I am really apprehensive that you will lose," said Mrs. Grahame, anxiously. "Not that it can make any real difference, of course, but it will be a gratification to the winner."

"Of course Blue will lose," asserted Nora, indifferently. "I predicted it from the first, you remember."

"Rose is ahead," cried an excited voice. "The last round and Rose ahead. White gains again! Blue is coming up—White lags!"

"Well done, Blue, but you may as well give up the battle. Rose is in for it!"

At the last half-round the ladies in the carriages rose en masse. Nora remained in her place, quite unconcerned throughout, but Mrs. Grahame stood upon the seat with the long-nets forgotten, her own keen eyes quite sufficient unaided at the crisis.

"Well done, Blue!" Again a murmur of disappointment from the supporters of the White, and the other two were neck and neck. At the last quarter, Blue shot ahead and came in past the winning post, first, by three full lengths.

A shout went up. There was the confusion of many voices. Bettors went about receiving and paying their dues, and the defeated belles at another point, overlooking the course, received the sympathy of their followers.

"Let me be the first to congratulate you," Dare said, bending over to touch Nora's gloved hand. "May I see you this evening?"

"I shall appear in the parlors, and they are free to the public, I believe."

"What pains you take to tell me my presence is not welcome, Miss Carteret. I shall see you this evening, nevertheless."

He wheeled his horse and pressed with some difficulty to the opposite side of the carriage.

"Can't you speak a good word for me, Mrs. Grahame? You know what my hopeless passion is, and I shall not very much longer remain in this suspense. I have concluded 'to put it to the touch, to win or lose it all.'"

"You know I favor you, Owen, but there's no moving Nora from her own way. I can try, if you like, but I warn you it will be of no use."

"The best of us can do no more than try, you know. Do you return at once? I will call at your rooms an hour from now, if it suits your convenience."

Nora, engaged on her side, heard nothing of this, but suspected it, when Mrs. Grahame set the ball rolling on their homeward way.

"Owen Dare has become what I always predicted—a rising young man through his own efforts. Positively, the most promising in all my circle of acquaintance. You treat him with absolute cruelty, Nora. You are not apt to find another lover as truly devoted, and with such a brilliant prospect as he is bound to attain. I would not urge your consideration of him if the baronet were in the question, but as it is—"

"As it is, don't urge anything, Mrs. Grahame. Mr. Dare is not in ignorance of my sentiments, though he has chosen to ignore them."

"You are absurdly prejudiced. There are plenty young ladies would not wait a second offer from Owen Dare."

"Pity you couldn't persuade him to be satisfied with one of them. It would be an immense relief to me. Tell him so if he set you to speak for him."

Mrs. Grahame did tell him so in almost those very words when he presented himself an hour later.

"I am also engaged for it—for all, indeed."
"At least, a quadrille."
"Pray excuse me, Mr. Dare."

"You will not dance with me, you mean? When beauty wills there is nothing left but to obey." He bowed and drew back as her escort came to claim her, with a more passionate demon in his soul than had been there yet. He had been cold-blooded in all his villainy heretofore, but that night and that moment he would have sold himself for all eternity for power to wield her heart as she might have wielded his.

Mrs. Grahame, covertly watching, wondered what plan he could have in his mind to subdue that willful girl.

As he could not dance with the lady of his choice, Mr. Dare did not dance at all. He was lost to sight soon after, and the argus-eyed matron who was pledged to be his friend, supposed he had withdrawn in disgust. Nora did not even give him a thought. He was out of her sight, his pale, insouciant face was not the Gorgon-head to spoil her present enjoyment, and that was all she asked.

The evening was almost over. She had been congratulated over the triumph won by her color, she had danced with every one of the score of admirers laying claim to her favor; she had given Dare a quetus for the time, and she had caused her conscientious chaperone an unlimited amount of trouble in shadowing her fittings—two by no means unimportant additions to her enjoyment—and began at last to consider the entertainment monotonous. She sent away her escort on some pretext, slipped through curtains just stirring in the breeze, and stood on a little balcony alone under the purple night-sky with myriad star-eyes looking down.

She sunk into a seat with a quivering sigh. It was such a contrast, this stillness, peace, and universal harmony, to the heat and the crowd and the false and hollow pretensions at her back. Her appreciation of it was spent in that one long breath.

"Lovely, is it not?" said the one voice which of all she had come to detest. "What more perfect scenic effect than this, subdued yet distinct, ocean and sky, and masts which might be clouds hung apparently in the middle of space."

"Mr. Dare is so eloquent upon the theme I will not linger to disturb his enjoyment of it." She gathered the sweeping folds of her dress together and half-rose, but he drew back a step between her and the window which was the only means of entrance.

"Favor me with your attention one moment, Miss Carteret. You shall not be long detained. I came down to-day for the express purpose of saying what I have to say, and you shall hear it."

She inclined her head with the slightest perceptible touch of assent and looked away into the purple dimness of the night. If he would push matters to an extreme, the sooner his disclosure came the sooner she might expect to be free from his persistent and unwelcome attentions. It was no surprise to her that his words were brief and straight to the point.

"Miss Carteret, I have been devoted to you and to you alone for three long years. You cannot fail to know how I love you. Will you be my wife?"

She trifled with her fan as her eyes came slowly back to him. He could have gnashed his teeth in impatient rage at her utter cool indifference.

"You cannot fail to know what my answer must be, Mr. Dare. Since it is your wish to hear it in words, pray understand me to distinctly decline."

"Let me beg you will reconsider my proposal. I cannot offer you all the advantages, perhaps, you might gain with some of those popinjays who have been about you all evening, but the time will not be long coming when I can place you high above them all. Think of my long devotion. You will never find a heart more truly and wholly yours."

"If I were to think all my life it could not alter my decision."

"Yet I must ask you to consider once again. You have avowed your intention of making a very Quixotic sacrifice, of renouncing the wealth you have enjoyed, the luxuries and refinements which have attended it. Nature fitted you for a life like the one you of late years have led, never for poverty and a hand-to-hand struggle with the world. Let it be my pleasure to supply you with all you will relinquish."

"Since when have you become so tolerant of my purpose? I have fancied that Thornhurst rather than myself has been the object of that devotion which you make a boast."

"Then you have done me bitter injustice. I frankly avow I do not approve your purpose, but it is for you to decide that. Before ever Thornhurst was yours, before yourself suspected your succession to that fine old estate, I loved you as I love you now. You must remember and acknowledge that."

"I remember that you were in Colonel Vivian's confidence, that you had access to his papers, and most probably were acquainted with his plans. You choose to ignore a time still further back, which I have never forgotten. When you amused yourself by playing upon a little simple country girl's affections, as you supposed; that it was in reality a less tender attribute, simply an untutored girl's vanity, which was fostered for the time, was no fault of yours. That little episode of the Cape Cod coast gave me an approximation of your character, Mr. Dare, which has not been improved during our acquaintance since."

"You are hard on me, considering your own experience, Nora. When have you ever spared a man because he was young, inexperienced, untutored? I will not say had you remained there, come to maturity in those surroundings, with no more advantages than you were apt to command, that I would ever have spoken the words I have uttered to-night; but even then and there I recognized the diamond in the rough. It was reserved for later years to show me the polished, priceless gem."

"Enough, Mr. Dare." She rose as she spoke, scarcely concealing her unaffected disdain. "The old story grows tedious. Be kind enough to let me pass."

"One moment more. Will you not give me a hope of relenting? Am I to take this answer as final, irrevocable?"

"As final and irrevocable, Mr. Dare."

"Will you tell me why you reject me so decidedly? If you were quite heart-free you would not be so cruel. Who is the fortunate man to win where I have failed?"

"You presume, sir."

"It is not the baronet, upon whom Mrs. Grahame based her hopes. Possibly your intention of renouncing Thornhurst is not the purely unselfish motive which it has been ascribed. It may be the warm friendship so earnestly avowed more than two years ago was more than friendship even then. You spoke of approximating character a moment ago, Miss Carteret, but you are very lenient to criminality."

The slender form drew to its fullest height; angry scorn flashed in the dark eyes.

"I was aware you had done us the honor of watching, that night. I did not know you had played the more despicable part of eavesdropper, as well. It is no more than I might have expected of you, but it is enough to mark your reference as the height of presuming insolence. It is not so strange that you cannot comprehend a disinterested friendship. Now, sir, stand aside and let me pass."

He drew aside immediately.

"I venture to assert you will yet accord me greater justice as well as a more favorable answer than this you have given me to-night, nevertheless."

She swept past with no further word, and Owen Dare was left to contemplate scenic effects or occupy himself with his no doubt pleasant musings, to his own taste. He returned to town by the early morning train, and the gay Long Branch frequenters saw him there no more.

The dingy counting-room of Richard Grahame, merchant, was favored with his presence the afternoon following his return. It had been hot on the beach; it was stifling in the little dark room where the power which upheld the avenue mansion was centered. Mr. Grahame himself was perspiring over a small mountain of ledger, but it was a cold perspiration on even that sultry September afternoon. Money was tight; the fashionable matron at Long Branch had been inconvenienced by the fact; the merchant in his counting-room was more than inconvenienced—he saw before him a crisis—a chasm he could hardly hope to bridge.

He looked up impatiently, as the door opened, but turned half about at seeing who it was, and pushed the damp hair back from his worn face.

"Hot," said Dare, dropping into a chair. "It's too intense for steady work like this of yours, Grahame. You should lay off for a week or a day. It begins to tell on you."

"You make your own jaunts short, it appears to me."

"I am young yet, you know; I can stand hard work now, if I ever can. I'm back from the Branch, and Mrs. Grahame will make arrangements to return within a fortnight."

"She must come at once," said Mr. Grahame, nervously. "At once. I told you that distinctly, Dare."

"You did. Truth to tell, I made the little advance necessary for prolonging her stay. No doubt Miss Carteret would have done the same, had she known the exigency."

"Not she. She is too much bound up in that preposterous idea of giving up every thing in a few months more—giving to the winds though it will be—whether Vane Vivian ever turns up again or not. She would not have consented to use her income but for the yearly allowance, and my own representation of what Colonel Vivian's wishes would have been. You meant well enough, I have no doubt, but I wish you had carried out my instructions to the letter. Lusa has too good sense to imperil me when she knows what a pressure there is, and every dollar will be of avail in this cramp."

"If a few thousand for a few days will tide you through, I may be able to raise it."

"Thanks, no. Time is what I want more than money. Two months' time would be better to me than a hundred thousand to-day; but I have had two extensions already, and I can't ask for a third."

"Dare tapped his fingers with a little pearl-handled knife he had drawn from his pocket, and glanced at the pile of ledgers upon the desk."

"I suppose I know more of your business than any other man in town," he said. "I have a proposal to make after I tell you of a proceeding of my own. I went down to Long Branch for the purpose of making an offer of marriage to your ward, and I was rejected."

"Ah!" The merchant was evidently neither very deeply interested nor much surprised at the result.

"For all which I am here to ask your sanction of my suit. I am not discouraged. I want to marry Miss Carteret, and I want your influence on my side. I am not beyond my reckoning in supposing I can count on you?"

"You have no knowledge of Nora if you suppose my influence would have any weight with her in a matter like that. The most willful, perverse girl I ever saw in my life, when her mind is once set. Begging your pardon, she never did take to you, Dare. She is not apt to like you better if you badger her now."

"I don't ask you to make her care for me. That will come of itself in time, or if it don't—my object is to marry her. For the promise of your aid so far as lies in your power, I will engage to procure you the two months' extension you would like."

"You know what that time will be to me, Dare, and you know the mettle of the girl. I might promise readily enough, but I couldn't give you any hope. Plenty of girls will say 'No' and mean 'Yes,' but Nora is not of the kind."

"Never was a shrew who could not be tamed; never a girl who might not be broken. Even that high-spirited ward of yours may be rendered docile and obedient, Mr. Grahame. The question is, will you do your part toward making her so?"

"Tell me plainly what you are driving at," said the merchant, uneasily. "For my own part I don't see that Nora could do better, but if she has refused you I don't see how you are going to help yourself letting the matter end there. I'd rather not mix myself in it at all."

"Not for fifty thousand dollars on our marriage-day! Your service will be worth that, and I can afford it out of the dower my bride will bring. Any other guardian would prove her crazy as a Bedlamite and send her to an asylum through her wayward notions. You can do better; give her into my hands and I will answer for controlling her afterward, and you'll realize handsomely for your share in the matter. What do you say?"

"I don't understand your drift yet. A girl can't be made to marry against her will, in this day, and Nora will never consent, you may be sure."

"Stranger things might happen than either of those. There are more ways of breaking a woman than one. Nora has been two years in society now, and like any other girl, would die of ennui to be cut off from it suddenly. My plan is, instead of bringing her back to the city, to send her on to Thornhurst alone. Your embarrassments will serve as an excuse, and Mrs. Grahame can readily find a pretext for remaining behind. The place is gloomy as a tomb, the rooms closed, the furniture in swaddling-clothes, the whole neighborhood changed, all of her old acquaintances gone. She will be ready to accept the alternative in less than a month, or, if not, we can take a clergyman down to read the marriage-ceremony over us, and she will be my wife fast as though no coy spirit on her part had given trouble."

A gray shade crept into Richard Grahame's face. He understood plainly as if Dare had said it, that the last alternative was the intention he had marked from the first.

"You couldn't do it," he said. "No clergyman would, in this day."

"The Reverend Arthur Gratins would. He wants my influence in procuring him a city call. All I ask of you is to back me in the business at Thornhurst. Will you do it?"

Two months' extension of his bills and fifty thousand dollars on their marriage-day were in Richard Grahame's mind. He liked Nora in a way; he rather shrunk from the thought of losing her respect, but—

He looked up to find Dare's eyes upon him. "I haven't any choice," he said, almost sullenly. "I don't like the business, but I'll do what you've asked of me in return for what you have promised."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 262.)

A Coquette's Lesson.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"LUCKY!" Well, possibly I may be, but there's such a thing as not knowing when one is well off, I suppose, Deane."

"And you've arrived at that stage if you have any fault to find with your fortune, Carroll. Nothing in life seems to fall to your lot more onerous than simply to take 'the goods the gods provide.' A pretty fair array of 'em when you came here, and now to cap the shaft you are prime favorite with the prettiest girl here—the one great attraction and sensation with whom Mrs. Ellicott has drawn and held us all. We of the less favored may gaze and gaze, and gaze again, but our mute adoration counts for nothing. Are you really going to verify Dame Rumor's prediction, my dear boy?"

"Depends somewhat upon the substance of the rumor, probably. What is it?"

"As if there was a necessity for your asking! Rumor says that Miss Vassar is to be transferred into Mrs. Carroll before the next season opens. If it be truth you owe a duty to all the other aspirants in that direction; you ought to put an end to the suspense and hoping against hope all those poor devils are enduring. I speak from philanthropic motives only, not being in the list myself."

"Your sentiment does you credit then. There are a couple of rather important considerations to be settled before I avail myself of your suggestion, however: to make up my own mind to the step, and to secure Miss Vassar's consent."

"The last may be taken for granted, my dear boy; you are always safe to win."

"Well, I fancy I may say so myself without undue confidence—in this case. But, did you ever hear of the little cad with his hands full of oranges crying for one he hadn't got? I believe I am in that boat now, even accepting your assurance and counting Miss Vassar as secure, if that course proves itself to my liking. Don't ask whether it will or not; about that I suppose there can be no question."

The tone was one of pathetic resignation admirable to hear. In the code of romance a straight nose and a mustache will bring all women down before them, and Mr. Carroll had found it so in every instance but one; that, it is needless to say, being the one where he himself was deeply concerned. But all that now "as a thing of the past, there was nothing left for him but to make up his mind to the present issue, to ask Miss Vassar's consent gracefully, and submit himself to his fate."

Such a gentleman's own reflections. Had he seen the flash which came to the eyes, the glow which rose into the cheeks of an unseen auditor of that conversation, he might have been a little startled from his complacent assurance.

"He deserves a lesson," thought Miss Vassar, as she looked out at him from her window-seat. "Thanks to the inventor of Venetian blinds, he shall have it!"

"And I do believe I was almost caring for him. A pretty pass for you to come to, Edna Vassar, but you are not going to be taken up by a man who don't care a fig for you, rest assured. Now, be off and dress your prettiest before he discovers that you are within six feet of him and fully conversant with the spirit of his intentions."

The apostrophe was observed. Miss Vassar made her appearance upon the lawn an hour later, looking her prettiest beyond a doubt, sparkling and vivacious as she always was, and surrounded in a moment by the half-score of admirers who had been following forlornly in her wake this month past. She was one of her healthful, breezy girls, with a vivid color and a ringing laugh and a clear, far-reaching voice, not in the least after Carroll's idea of what young ladyhood should be. He had his ideal and it was embodied in a certain Miss Elise May with whom he had parted on anything but amicable terms some ten weeks before. A perfect type of calm, blonde loveliness was that Miss May, her blue eyes and yellow hair seeming to have caught their tints from the sky and the sunshine, such an etherealized being as poets have idealized in their songs, and Carroll was dreamer enough to prefer the type.

"Come and be my partner at croquet, Miss Vassar."

"No, Miss Vassar; let me tempt you to something pleasanter and less energetic. I brought out the chess-board purposely to have my revenge of you."

"Edna, my dear," said Mr. Deane as he just appeared with some new specimen he is attempting to classify. Do go there and give him the benefit of your botanical knowledge."

"Croquet, chess and botany—what next?" cried Miss Vassar, laughingly. "Indeed, but I'll have none of them. I am going for a walk to bring my appetite up to the proper pitch by the time dinner is ready. You may go along, if you will promise to be upon your good behavior, Mr. Carroll."

"You should command, Miss Vassar. That is always the queen's province."

"Then it would be most absurd for me to intrude upon it. No one knows better than I do that the majestic is not my forte."

"There I must beg permission to differ with you. Your forte is to exact devotion from your most loyal subjects, and surely majesty can do no more."

"And it would be the height of folly for me to include Mr. Carroll in that number. There are contumacious subjects as well as those most loyal, confess yourself in the category of the first, sir, if I classed in the number at all."

Miss Vassar had an uncomfortable way of making him feel the hollowiness of his own professions; she neither blushed nor simpered, as other young ladies did, under the force of his soft flatteries; she simply met him on an equal ground, looked him straight in the face with those honest eyes of hers, and appearing the very soul of frankness herself, self-knowledge of his own insincerity gave her a decided advantage. In sheer desperation, the

recklessness of despair, he had plunged into his flirtation with her, and gone so far that he saw no clear way out of it. More than once he had been impelled to desert the field, to retreat in dishonor if no honorable way was left, and the prompting had never been upon him stronger than this afternoon. One of those in all our pathways that leave their little crosses in all our pathways goaded him on to victory instead.

Their walk took them into a long, shaded, grass-grown byroad, seemingly deserted by the busy world of travel.

"It's a long lane that has no turning, and this appears to be one of the kind. There, Mr. Carroll, I will not lengthen the course of your trials; I know that you are as averse to this sort of exercise as I am fond of it. I think I could rival an Englishwoman in feats of pedestrianism, and shall surely match myself against some average specimen, if I am ever fortunate enough to cross the ocean."

"Is that one of your aspirations?"

"Which oh, crossing the ocean. Well, no, I can't say that it is, but I shall go some day, I suppose. Of course you are aware there is nothing else of repute in this day for the wedding trip. There's one consolation remains—the fashion may change before I have occasion to take mine."

She had stopped and was leaning against the mossy rail-fence beside the way. She had taken off her straw hat and was swinging it by the strings, a vivid, animated picture, but then Carroll was an admirer of beauty in repose. He had never been less in love with her than at that moment; he was even struggling to suppress a little yawn, when a carriage appeared in near view, hoofs and wheels giving but short warning on that grassy road. His first glimpse was of the fair face, clear-cut as a cameo, outlined against its azure linings. Sudden hot anger and resentment flashed over him. He gave one glance, then bent in a most lower-like attitude toward Miss Vassar, making a feint of examining a trailing green spray she had plucked, and imprisoning the hand which held it, just as the vehicle rolled swiftly by.

"What did you say, Mr. Carroll? Make that trip with you! I think I hardly understand."

Full comprehension of what his murmured idiocy had been came upon him then. It didn't matter, he thought; he might as well make an end of the affair then and there.

"Notwithstanding what you say, I think you do understand, Miss Vassar. There is but one capacity in which I could wish to accompany you upon the wedding trip—as your happy bridegroom. If I might hope for that felicity."

The clear eyes lifted to his steadily.

"Do you really mean that? Do you mean that you are asking me to be your wife?"

He was feverishly ashamed and dissatisfied even then, but he had passed all chance of retreat. He poured out a somewhat incoherent reply; he meant it, he knew he was not half worthy the great boon he asked, but if she could so far honor him as by the acceptance of his heart and hand, it would be the duty of his life to study her happiness.

"Well, then," answered Miss Vassar, very coolly. "I don't see why I shouldn't. Since you wish it so very much, I'm quite willing."

Carroll experienced a qualm under her easy way of treating the subject; there was not one particle of sentiment involved, and he was an adorer of sentiment. He walked back to the house by her side without one thrill of the rapture a newly-accepted lover is supposed to experience.

Deane was the first person he encountered there after he had parted from her.

"Have you seen the new arrival?" queried he. "Oh, passed you, did they? I thought it probable. More charming than ever, that pretty Miss May, though a little out of sorts I fancy from her pale looks. Disappointment in love, maybe; wasn't there some rumour of the kind?"

"Not to my knowledge, just the opposite. She is engaged to marry St. Mar."

"Bless you, man, no! Did you never have the history of that affair? It comes to me now as it should not, being more than three months old at most. The old story of jealousy and a lovers' quarrel, St. Mar being at the bottom of it. She gave him, Sainty, I mean, his quietus and sent him about his business, but whether lover No. 1 came back to his allegiance is more than I can say. We'll hope so for the sake of all concerned."

Carroll turned and went into the house in a blindly-groping way, fairly reeling under the dizzy sickness which possessed him. All his own precipitate folly which had parted them, all his own precipitate folly again which had built up a barrier between them that future time could not level.

The desolation of despair which came upon him with that knowledge never lessened, never lifted in the days and the weeks which followed. It was at once his only comfort and his keenest agony to meet her daily, to breathe the same air, to hear her voice, to be near her, to feast his longing eyes on her unseen—these were the only objects life held for him just then. Fortunate was it that Miss Vassar was no exacting fiancée. Their betrothal had not been made public, and there was no tender love-making to hint to lookers-on of its existence.

And with Elise May—was it as Deane had hinted? Did she remember, was she faithful to her first love still? Eagerly Carroll watched for some sign, but if she too had her secret that fair, pale face kept it well. She was not one to wear her heart upon her sleeve, nor to show her wounds however slight or however cruel.

But he was not forgotten; one day came when he knew this.

He was wandering like a disconsolate spirit through the house. All the doors stood wide, the other men were haunting the trout-brooks, and the ladies were engrossed in the parlors by the latest sweetest novelty in bonnets, when there came a breezy rush upon the stairs, the sound of a ringing, penetrating voice, which set his blood tingling most unpleasantly.

"Did you ask for your morphia, Mrs. Ellicott? I think I saw it in Elise's room. Don't ask me to fetch it, though; I set myself face and principle against such evil practices."

Carroll heard while one idea, to escape encountering her, filled his mind. He made a bolt through the nearest open door, swung it to, noiselessly, and then looked about him. A woman's dainty trumpery littered the room, some sheets of Bristol-board were strewn upon a table and a portfolio lay there; the pencil-sketch of a face caught his eye; he went closer and looked down upon himself. His own pencilled face, and traced below in faint, irregular characters as if it were the unwilling cry of a full heart: "I have been most happy—and most miserable."

It told its own story to his aching, agonized sight. He had put from him forever the happiness which might have been his; life held nothing now to make it a desirable gift. A groan broke over his lips and then, as if in

answer to that scarcely defined thought, he saw before him a little vial full of a colorless liquid labeled "Morphia."

He took it in his hand, weighing it and wondering in a numb, apathetic way if it was enough to silence pain forever. He had heard no step and no sound, but something drew his glance to the door; he saw standing there Miss Vassar! All the bright color had gone suddenly out of her cheeks; next instant she was beside him and caught the vial from his unresisting hand.

"You did not mean that," she cried, in an agitation she could not quite suppress; "you could not, but—but you had a terrible look upon your face for one moment. Come out here, I have something to say to you."

She drew him away to an upper piazza, and with her hand upon his arm walked up and down there beside him, her own equanimity returned.

"It is not flattering to me if you were contemplating morphia as an alternative. I think I can offer you another rather more agreeable. Here is your ring, Mr. Carroll, and you have your freedom back with it. And don't think I shall break my heart, pray! I have too great a regard for that useful organ to subject it to needless knocks, and it has never been involved to any serious degree in our mutual relation. I chanced to know of your trouble and Elise's before I came here, and when I found you so willing to believe yourself invincible, and all women ready to be won with a word, I thought you would be none the worse for a lesson. It has ended, so now go and make your peace with Elise; she knows nothing of all this."

"But you," said Carroll, in sudden remorseful trepidation, "how you must despise me! What a poor weak wretch I must seem to you!"

She looked away that he might not see the little mist, almost regret and almost pain, which for a single instant clouded the frank eyes. Then answered, lightly:

"Not so bad as that. I will most gladly be your friend always, if you care to have me as such. Now, go!"

He went, he made his peace, and the happiness which came afterward was more perfect for his lesson.

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WELLINGTON, Lorain Co., O., Aug. 24, 1874.

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AN EARLY POEM.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

One evening just at noon in May
I walked out horseback, feeling gay,
I took my parasol, you see,
To keep the moon from melting me;
The atmosphere was stirring not,
And in the calm the wind blew hot.

From limb to limb, all in the sun,
I saw the little heifers run;
I heard the songs of voiceless rills
As they slid babbling up the hills;
Boys hung their skates upon a limb,
And in the water took a swim.

The summer fields, so deep in snow,
Were green with verdant grass, and oh,
The heaviest rain I can recall
On this occasion didn't fall!
I put my horse up with a frown,
And my umbrellas I put down.

The light flea gambled with the kid,
The oyster chased the katydid;
The ant improved the shining hours
In gathering honey from the flowers;
The oak leaves loaded down the oak,
The ash-tree with ash-toppers broke.

The clear sky was quite full of clouds;
The thunder lit them up like shrouds;
The lightning roared incessantly—
Such stillness I did never see.
The bright blue heavens beneath my feet
I thought had never seemed so sweet.

Maud Muller all that August day
Was in the meadow chopping hay,
With briar-torn hat, and straw-made gown.
I varied my hand as I rode down
And called a drink; she calmly said—
"I'd find a spring a mile ahead!"

LEAVES

From a Lawyer's Life.

BY A. GOULD PENN.

VIII.—Mattie's Guardian.

"Is Mr. Smith in?" asked a female voice.
I wheeled in my chair, for I had been busy
writing and heard no one enter, and was con-
fronted by an elderly female in poke bonnet
and home-spun dress.

"Yes, ma'am, that is my name; what can I
do for you?"

"Wal, now, I didn't know you was Mr.
Smith. I ain't used to these lawyers' offices,
nohow. Yes, thankie," as she accepted the
chair I handed her.

"My name is Rachel Morse," she continued,
"and I've come to consult you, Mr. Smith."
"Certainly, Mrs. Morse; I am at leisure."

"Wal, now, Mr. Smith, I want to tell you
about my niece, Mariar, poor child; she's been
havin' a heap o' trouble along with her garden,
dear Squire Upton. You know the squire,
Mr. Smith?"

"No, ma'am, I have not the honor of his ac-
quaintance."

"Mighty small honor that would be, Mr.
Smith. But, as I was sayin', he's been Mariar's
garden, but it's a awful garden he's been to
the poor child, and now she's got to go to court-
in' to get her just dews."

"Has the guardian abused his trust?" I asked.

"Abused! I sh'd think he had abused the
poor child; and as to trust—law sakes! I
wouldn't trust him no further than I would a
dog with my dinner; no sir, Mr. Smith."

"What is the trouble, Mrs. Morse?"

"Trouble enough—nothin' but trouble. You
see, Mariar is a spunky little gal, and says
she's goin' to hev her rights. And old Squire
Upton has been speakin' off the poor girl's
money, as her dear old father left her, and a-
losin' some of it. She's had to jist fight him
a'most to get enough to finish her education,
and she'll soon be of age herself, but she wants
to get her money out of the old rascal's clutches
 afore that time."

"Ah, I see; she wishes to have this guardian
 ousted."

"Yes, h'ist him; that's the idea," she re-
sponded, gravely.

With difficulty I restrained my risibles, and
as to Ayres, who had been listening, he darted
out of the back door, and I heard him laughing
heartily. But I was fairly cornered and must
make the best of my untutored visitor.

"What is the age of this ward?" I inquired.

"Ward! Oh, you mean Mariar Morse?
Yes; wal, she's goin' on eighteen, come next
grass."

By my shrewd questioning, I drained all
the facts from the old lady, and found that it
would be necessary to have the guardian
brought into court for settlement, and per-
haps bring a suit on his bond.

"You must come and see me again in a few
days, and bring your niece along, as I wish to
converse with her also," I explained.

"Laws, now, Mr. Smith; Mariar is a mighty
high-toned gal, and I don't 'spect she'll want
to come to a lawyer's office. Howsomever, I'll
avail onto her to come if I can," and with that
she departed, leaving me to have out my laugh
with Ayres, when he returned.

Several days passed, during which time I
was employed in examining records, and ob-
taining the necessary information in regard to
the case.

Returning to the office, one day, I found
that Lewis Ayres was chatting merrily with a
handsome, blue-eyed young lady, and our for-
mer visitor.

"Law sakes, Mariar, here's Mr. Smith," was
the old lady's greeting.

Lewis then politely introduced me to Miss
Morse, and my first glance into her merry blue-
eyes completely disconcerted me; I blushed
like a schoolboy.

How we got through the interview I never
could remember. I could not keep my eyes
off the bright face of Maria Morse, and I saw
that Ayres was watching me, which added to
my confusion.

But, at last, the interview ended, and the
ladies took their departure—not, however, un-
til, in answer to Mrs. Morse's earnest solici-
tation, I had agreed to call upon them soon.

"Ah, Smith, you are a lucky fellow. The
old lady has taken a fancy to you, and Miss
Maria has scared so much law out of you that
I fear you will have to study hard to regain it,"
teased Ayres.

"Oh, yes; you married men are always
imagining strange things of we old bachelors,"
I answered; "but tell me, Lewis, how you
came to know Miss Morse?"

"A schoolmate of mine, Smith; but I don't
know much about her excepting that she is an
orphan, and under the care of this eccentric
old aunt. I do know she is a smart and high-
ly-educated young lady. She taught a country
school last winter, and she sings and writes
poetry."

"That will do, Ayres. Sings and writes
poetry, eh?"

"Now, you need not think the less of her
for that; she is an accomplished, sensible—
sweet."

"Get out with your nonsense!"

"A lovely client, Smith, and if you don't
want to take the case, I will."

"Get out, I say!" and laughing at my con-
fusion, Ayres left the office.

I went into the case with a full determina-
tion to bring the cheating old guardian to
terms; but I found many difficulties in the
way.

The guardianship had extended over several
years, and on examination of the record I found
that the guardian had persistently evaded his
regular settlements with the proper court, and
it was impossible for me to ascertain the
amount of funds in his hands belonging to the
ward, so I was compelled to have him cited to
appear and settle.

Meanwhile I found it necessary to avail my-
self of Mrs. Morse's kind invitation to call on
them, and I was well received at the little cot-
tage home, some distance from the town.

Miss Mattie treated me with great considera-
tion, and made my first visit so pleasant that
my bashfulness in her presence soon wore
away, and she regaled me with music on her
piano and her lively conversation.

At length I began to feel more like a privi-
leged character at the cottage, and my visits
were taken as a matter of course.

If Ayres was aware of it he made no men-
tion, and as time slipped by, my acquaintance
with my pretty client resulted in frequent
visits and buggy-rides.

The conclusion was inevitable. I became
earnestly in love with Miss Morse, and finding
that my attentions were so well received I re-
solved to hazard my fate.

The difference in our ages was considerable,
it is true, but I flattered myself that I was still
young, and not altogether ugly. And, besides,
I had never before met a woman who so com-
pletely filled my *beau ideal* as sweet Mattie
Morse.

Her aged aunt I found to be an earnest and
amiable old lady, despite her old-fashioned and
 quaint ways.

But should I plead my case now, or wait
until the termination of this annoying law-
suit? After arguing the matter *pro* and *con*
in my own mind I at length concluded that I
would at least present my claim, and if I should
be accepted then to await the final termination
of the litigation to have the wedding.

I am not going to tell how awkwardly I
managed to propound the momentous question.
Suffice it to say, that I was soon set at ease
by Mattie's sensible answer, and obtained the
promise of a life guardianship over her, as
soon as the present temporary guardian could
be removed.

Of course our engagement was not made
public, and I fancied that I had managed the
matter with considerable tact, and so applied
myself assiduously to the case.

Proceedings were duly instituted, and I was
anxiously awaiting the final day.

An old gentleman called into my office
one day, and gave me his name as Israel Upton.
"Glad to meet you, Squire Upton," I said,
with an attempt at hearty greeting, when in
very truth I had no desire whatever to meet
the arch enemy of my own sweet, promised
wife, until the day of triumph should ar-
rive.

"Your name is Smith, eh?" and I imagined
the old man placed a contemptuous emphasis
on the name.

"Yes, sir," I responded.

"And you have had me cited to appear in
court concerning this guardianship?" he asked,
in an overawing, brassy manner.

I began to get somewhat angry at his in-
sulting manner. My first glance at him had
assured me of his status, and I could read him
through like a book. Arrogance, firmness,
obstinacy, cunning were written on his face,
and I saw he was about to try a bluff game on
me.

"I have, sir, and allow me to assure you
that unless you do appear and make a full and
satisfactory showing of your trust, and at once
resign the same, I will make it interesting for
you," was my answer to his question.

"Tut, tut, young man, don't you think it
would be better for you to drop this matter,
and not try to meddle with the affairs of old-
er folks?"

I sprang to my feet, mad enough to throw
myself upon the old hypocrite and give him a
deserved drubbing. But, with an effort I re-
strained myself, and answered him hotly.

"You are an old man, sir, and nothing but
my respect for your gray hairs prevents me
from laying hands of violence upon you. Leave
my office, sir, and we will let the law take its
course in this matter!"

He paled somewhat, and without another
word left the office, and I saw him enter that
of a professional brother.

But, I had no fears. I had a clear case
against him, and felt perfectly easy as to the
final result.

"Whew, Smith, I had no idea you were
on your muscle!" laughed Ayres, who came
in during my last speech to the old man.

I gave a laughing reply, having regained my
temper, and feeling a little ashamed of my-
self for having even for a moment lost control
of it.

"I'll teach the old rogue a thing or two
about guardianship, before I am done with
him."

"Yes, and supersede him, too, eh?"

I saw by Ayres' looks that he knew or sus-
pected all.

"Your hand, old fellow," he said, "I con-
gratulate you with all my heart, and feel as-
sured of your complete success."

"Thank you, Lew," was all I could reply.

Our day in court came at last, and as Mat-
tie's presence there was not absolutely neces-
sary, in deference to her wishes I told her to
remain at home. But, aunt Rachel was there;
nothing could have kept her away, and as she
was an important witness on my side she gave
her testimony with a gusto, and in her own
queer language until the gravity of the court
was seriously disturbed.

Our opponents fought for every advantage,
but there could be but one result, and that in
our favor.

The guardian was compelled to disclose and
account for his trust to the last dollar, and to
my utter astonishment the sum total was over
fifty thousand.

This discovery disconcerted me not a lit-
tle, as I had never dreamed I had won an heir-
ess, and when I at last spoke about it, Mrs.
Morse reassured me in her own clever way.

"It don't make any difference, Andrew,"
she claimed the right to use any given
name; "forin' or no forin', you shall have
Mariar. I'm so pesky glad you upst that old
rascal that I could say the same if Mariar had-
n't a cent to her name."

Well, I was in for it. And on due delibera-
tion my duty was plain. This sweet girl
was now left with a large amount of money on
her hands, and no guardian to manage it for
her. I had agreed to be her new guardi-
an, and she would not release me from the
promise—had I asked her.

Without a cent she was precious to me, and
now why should I object to a few thousands to
add to her future comfort?

A short time elapsed, and I was duly install-
ed as Mattie's guardian—for better or for
worse.

An Earthquake's Donation.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE.

TEN or twelve paces from high-water mark,
under the bluffs of the island of St. Eustacia,
in the Caribbean Sea, are about thirty ruined
stone huts, which were once the country resi-
dences of a gentry known as "buccaneers,"
or, in common parlance, "pirates"—fifty or
sixty years ago.

And the way that I came to be the occupant
of one of them was this:

Joe Graves and I had chartered the schooner
Phebe, of about fifty tons, and having invested
all our available capital in patent medicines,
tobacco and bright-hued calicoes, had taken a
run down to the Spanish main, where we hoped
to trade our cargo for mahogany, shells, fruit
—in fact any thing that we could buy cheap
and sell dear.

I, with part of the stock in trade, had lo-
cated myself on the west side of St. Stacia,
from whence I made frequent incursions into
the island on the back of an antiquated mule,
that bore a singular resemblance to the old-
fashioned hair-trunk of my childhood, while
Joe, with the schooner, ran over to the Wind-
ward Islands, where he hoped to dispose of the
remainder of the cargo.

And having repaired the roof of one of the
best of these piratical abodes, using another of
them for a storeroom, I slung my hammock,
and establishing a cane-bottomed rocking-
chair, a hammock and my sea-chest as furni-
ture, I made arrangements with a "native" to
supply me with eatables, and so far as muske-
toes, sand-flies and heat allowed, proceeded to
take considerable lazy comfort in the intervals
of business.

The huts, or houses, were built of a sort of
lime-rock, cut in square blocks, neatly and
strongly cemented, each containing two small
rooms.

The room in which I had slung my hammock
and disposed my scanty furniture, looked di-
rectly out upon the blue waters of the Carib-
bean Sea, which is studded with islands; the
blue peaks of the mountains on Porto Rico
standing clear-cut against the dazzling sky,
miles away; the constantly recurring sails, and
an occasional steamer serving to break the
monotony of the sea-view, and I was more than
satisfied with my hermit residence.

One other feature of my room was a stone
seat, apparently part of the wall, over which
was cut a deep niche that at one time had
doubtless been the shrine of some patron saint,
but which made a very convenient receptacle
for my water-cooler of porous clay.

Here, after a long day's jaunt, I was ac-
customed to take my frugal supper, furnished by
a sable servant who lived close at hand, after
which, reclining in my hammock, I lazily
watched the antics of Master Jocko (a pet
monkey), who, when all available resources of
mischief had failed, was wont to make his way
to the water-cooler, upon which having climb-
ed, he would thrust his head and shoulders
down the narrow neck of the same, but his
cheeks distended with water prevented his
withdrawal, and consequently he would squeak
dismally from the hollow interior, and with
much thrashing of hind-legs and tail, would be
lifted from his humiliating position by his said
caudal appendage.

I was expecting the schooner any day, and
had succeeded in obtaining a goodly quantity
of mahogany in exchange for a half-bale of
cheap calicoes and a keg of tobacco, when, one
evening, as I stood looking out oceanward,
where the sun was setting in a bank of the
most vivid-hued clouds, one of the colored fel-
lows, who often brought fish and fruit to me,
remarked, as he came to my side:

"Your vessel no get in to-morrow, no come
at all."

"How so, Pete?" I asked.

"Big tornado come, maybe earthquake—
Maum Badra" (a quadroon woman who was
implicitly believed in by the natives as a witch
of the first water) "say it come bime-by soon,"
was the answer of Pete, as, with much rolling
of the eyes, and indications of fear, he took
his departure.

Somewhat uneasy, yet provoked at myself
for my unfounded fears, I retired to rest very
early, but the air seemed to be suffocating, as
I tossed from side to side, and on looking out
at about nine o'clock, the darkness seemed so
intense as almost to be felt.

Thunder muttered in the south-west, which,
with the moan of the breakers on the coral
reef, was an effectual preventative to sleep, a
fact that Jocko seemed to be fully aware of—
that mischievous biped being in a high state
of nervous excitement, and chattering incessantly.

With a rush and a roar that is perfectly in-
describable, the tornado in its awful fury was
upon us. The most vivid lightning, and thunder
that seemed to rend the very air, vied with
the roar of the wind, which was deafening, to
make the scene one never to be forgotten.

Fortunately the stone huts were all built
under the lee of the high bluffs of the island,
and were somewhat protected from the wind,
although they were shaken to their very founda-
tions.

Suddenly came a lull of the elements, so
quickly and unexpectedly that it was, if possi-
ble, more awful than the storm. And then,
with a rumble and a jar that threw me to the
floor, came the earthquake shock, that was felt
in every island of the Caribbean Sea, and the
rapid manner in which I found my feet
and the door was perfectly marvelous, as I
am not usually active in my movements.

Then it began to rain—not in sheets, but by
oceans' full, as it seemed to me, but as the
wind had ceased, and I felt that the heaviest
of the storm was over, I mustered courage to
enter my dwelling, the roof of which was
badly demoralized, the walls started from their
foundations, and the stone seat which I had
supposed to have been built into the wall,
thrown into the middle of the room.

With daylight came a cessation of the rain,
and by seven o'clock the sun was as bright and
the sky as unclouded as though they were not
looking on a scene of devastation that had never
before been equaled in that portion of the
Globe.

Every island, for hundreds of miles, felt the
effects of the tornado, and the shores far and
near were strewn with wrecks.

With a heavy heart, I proceeded to restore
as well as I could my badly-shaken dwelling,
so that it might be habitable, and as I looked
toward the fissure in the wall from which the
stone seat had been thrown, I became aware
of Master Jocko, who, thrusting his sable paw
into the vacant space, to my amazement,
brought out from its long-concealed hiding-
place a quaint-looking steel-barreled pistol of
the flint-lock pattern, the handle being mount-
ed in silver tarnished by time.

Driving him away, and stooping down I dis-
covered a square aperture where was placed a
small box, roughly constructed of red wood,
but banded securely with iron. Upon this lay
the companion pistol to the one that Jocko had

found, and a long bladed Spanish knife covered
with rust.

My heart almost stood still, and I was half-
inclined to think it a wild dream, but, with-
drawing the casket from its receptacle, I suc-
ceeded in breaking it open, and before my
dazzled eyes lay ten or twelve rolls of Spanish
moldores, a number of doubloons, a single ear-
drop, the setting of which was bent and broken,
but the stone was certainly as large as a pea,
and evidently a diamond of the purest water,
an old-fashioned pair of gold-bowed spectacles,
a large gold watch, of the pattern of half a
century ago, marked "Robertson, New York,
maker;" and a pair of heavily-chased gold
bracelets comprised the contents of the box.

As near as I could estimate, the value of the
whole must have been not far from twelve
thousand dollars.

"Well, you have struck it rich!" said a
well-known and thrice-welcome voice behind
me, and turning, I saw Joe, with his eyes dis-
tended with wonder, gazing with incredulous
astonishment at the scene, in which myself and
the discovered treasure, bore so prominent a
part.

Joe had made a harbor on the lee side of the
island the evening before, in a land-locked
cove, where, with both anchors down, he had
ridden out the gale in safety, and, knowing
how anxious I must be, had walked across the
island to apprise me of the safe arrival of the
"Phebe," which shortly afterward came to an-
chor near by, and we commenced loading, hav-
ing nearly an entire cargo, on which we reck-
oned making full seventy-five per cent. in the
New York market.

A few nights before we left the island I
visited Mother Badra's, who being presented
with some trinkets and tobacco, promised us a
successful run to New York and fair weather
the entire passage, which by a coincidence
proved true.

She also told us many legends and stories
connected with the buccaneers, how they lived
in gayety and feasting, till their provisions and
wine spent, they manned their sharp feluccas
and preyed on the maritime commerce that a
half century since was such an important fea-
ture of the Spanish main, how they slew in
cold blood whole crews, and tortured men with
fiendish tortures, to make them show the se-
cret of the hiding-place for treasure on the
ships which they took.

"House where you lives, massa, b'longed to
one big Spanish debbil, Quistero he name. He
take one brig, s'pose he Yankee brig, b'long in
Yarmouth, Maine. Cap'n he young man, and
a crry great lot money to Havana—no steam-
boat dem days," continued the garrulous old
woman, whose remarkably good use of
English, was due to her traffic in shells and
fruit, with the crews of whalers and "fruit-
ers," that are constantly in the harbor of St.
Eustacia.

"Well, cap'n he have his wife, they not long
married, an' Quistero, he take brig in night, in
morning he say he hang cap'n, if he no tell
where money is on board, for they hunt an'
look, but no can find—cap'n he say 'no'—
Quistero he get mad, an' run him up to yard-
arm of brig, then lower him, but too late—he
choke to death."

"Then bring wife, she go crazy, an' fore
they catch her, overboard she go, an' plenty
shark round vessel, but she better be eat by
shark than be mistress of Quistero. But they
find de money in pantry, where cap'n he hide
in keg dry apple."

"I member when they bring brig in dis
harbor, they all drink, drink, drink, whole
week. My mudder an' fader they hide with
me, for pirate never harm nigger, only he
drunk."

"But big ship"—(H. M. S. "Triton," as I
afterward learned)—"come off de island one
mornin' an' fire big gun for all day with bomb-
shells. Kill—oh, so many pirate, fore they
run into island, an' then they send boat shore
with soldier, an' they shoot lot an' take pris'n-
er, an' never any pirate here no more. Quis-
tero, he captain, they take him to Havana, an'
hang him—hope break one, two, three time, he
so heavy, but he choke to de'th at las'."

With many other like reminiscences did the
old woman regale us till our departure, like an
animated copy of "The Pirates Own Book,"
and, if now living, she would be a fortune to
a penny-a-liner "interviewist."

Our round trip, after all expenses were paid,
netted us nearly eighty thousand dollars each,
our gold being sold when the highest premium
was paid thereon, and the diamond bringing
an excellent price. Which I think, was a
pretty good two months' work. Don't you?

Heroes of History.

BY LAUNCE POYNTE.

III.—Decatur and the Intrepid.

In the annals of the American navy of the
past there is no name that stands higher, if as
high, as that of Decatur. His name, like that
of Farragut in our time, is synonymous with
daring and skill, and a short account of his
principal actions will show the world that this
reputation rests on substantial grounds. De-
cat, like Farragut, was as cautious as he was
bold. He never did a rash thing, with all his
boldness. He would lie in wait for days and
days, preparing for a spring. When that
spring came, it was as sudden and swift as that
of the tiger.

Stephen Decatur, the hero of our first navy,
entered the service in the year 1798. He had
been a merchant sailor, and acquired skill
enough to command a ship, for he was at once
placed in command of a small ship, the Dela-
ware, of twenty guns. It is not every one
who knows that after our Revolutionary war
was over the United States had no navy at all,
and provided for none, for over twelve years.
It was only when their commerce increased,
and the Algerine pirates began to prey on it,
that Congress waked up at last to the necessity
of having a navy, to protect their merchants
from plunder.

It was in 1783 that the Revolutionary navy
was disbanded, and only three years later the
Dey of Algiers took a Boston schooner, the
Maria. The American Government begged
for its release and got nothing but insults in
return. At last Congress concluded to arm
and enforce reparation. A bill was passed or-
dering the building of three very famous ships
—famous long after—the Constitution, United
States, and President, with three smaller frig-
ates.

Having ordered the ships, however, Congress
backed down to the Dey of Algiers, and finally
agreed to pay him a million of dollars to leave
our ships alone. This shows how much cheap-
er, as well as more honorable, it often is to
fight instead of negotiating. The same million
dollars would have paid for all the three frig-
ates, and made the Dey civil forever. As it
was, he kept the peace till he wanted more
money, and then broke it. Congress allowed
the building of the ships to stop or languish
along till the year 1797, when the United States

and Constitution were at last got into the wa-
ter. Meantime, the French had begun the same
insults as the Algerines, and twenty
smaller vessels were ordered built. In 1798
Congress declared war against France, and
Stephen Decatur was made lieutenant-com-
mander and sent to sea in the Delaware, of
twenty guns. During this war, however, he
found but little opportunity of distinguishing
himself. It was short and uneventful, ending
in a patched-up peace. It was not till the war
with Tripoli, in 1804, that Decatur found a
chance to show what he was made of.

In that war America was the first to punish
the Barbary pirates, and bring them to terms,
and Decatur was one of its grand heroes.

It hardly seems credible to us, nowadays,
that for three hundred years the powers of
Europe should have allowed their commerce to
be preyed on by these same pirates, and should
have actually paid them large tributes, from
year to year, to purchase protection. Yet so
it was